

Artisan of the Paradise
A STUDY OF
ART AND ARTISANS OF KASHMIR
From Ancient to Modern Times

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Artisan of the Paradise
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From Ancient to Modern Times

D.N. DHAR

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Artisan of the Paradise : A Study of Kashmir Art and Artisans from Ancient to Modern Times

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TO THE MEMORY OF
MY WIFE—URMILA

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PREFACE

Kashmir has had a unique distinction of recording events and trends of thought from generation to generation, in sharp contrast to the tradition in rest of the Indian sub-continent.

Notwithstanding the rich materialistic cultural base, early Indian philosophical thought, though rich in essence, rejected the existence of the external world and concentrated more on finding the truth within one's own self. This being the dominant ethos, maintenance of any record about the world around perhaps appeared futile to them. They considered their physical being as something illusory. Even M.A. Stein in the Introduction to Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*, without examining in detail the causes which prevented the growth of historical literature in India in the Western sense of the word observes, "They (causes) are most closely connected with deep-rooted peculiarities of Indian thought and culture which have rendered the mind of the Indian scholar indifferent to the search for the bare truths of historical facts and have effectively prevented it from arriving at the perception of historical development and change."

Kashmir, on the other hand, had developed, very early in history, a positive philosophical thought (Saivism) which affirmed the external world as something real and as an important link in the long process of search for the truth. A Kashmiri was not therefore, averse to the realities of life around him. This had led to his healthy perception towards writing history. Thus we find, the works of Kalhana, Jonraja, Srivara and others who preceded and followed Kalhana emitting a keen sense of history.

Highly valued in their importance as historical records, these chronicles, narrate the stories of kings, their achievements and failures but very little about the people, their thought, culture and socio-economic conditions. "I wish to write a history not of wars, but of society; and to ascertain how men lived in the interior of their families, and what were the arts which they commonly cultivated... My object is the history of the human mind, and not a mere detail of petty facts; nor am I concerned with the history of great lords..., but I want to know what were the steps by which men passed from barbarism to civilization." writes Voltaire.

Some studies, giving an overview of these aspects have been attempted but a detailed study has still eluded us.

This work is an attempt at a micro-study of the history of Kashmir on a subaltern model. The canvas being wide, the beginning has been made with the production of a work on the artisans of Kashmir who have established their name and fame throughout the world.

The artisan has benefited from the rich natural environment of the valley of Kashmir. His whole work has been inspired by the beautiful objects of nature "...to knead nature into a work of art is nearest approximation to the knowledge of god head," says Abhinavagupta. The beautiful objects of nature motivated the ancient people of Kashmir to anthropomorphise them giving artistic expression to their views about the world and its being. Kashmiri sculptors created aesthetically rich and beautiful forms of gods and goddesses in stones and metals representing various manifestations of that Supreme Being and built lofty temples to worship them. So we find the ruins of great *Martanda* and *Awantiswamin* temples still extant in Kashmir. Nature again contributed in providing the unique raw material and the inspiration for its woven design to produce the legendary shawl which formed a part of the caravan trade between Arabia and Egypt as back as the 18th century B.C.

Possessed with the natural instinct for artistic creations, the artisans of Kashmir produced elegant handmade pottery of various forms with geometrical designs similar to those found in Burzahom excavations, and terracotta tiles with complicated motifs drawn over them as found in Harwan excavations. He produced fine jewellery and ornaments of gold and also excellent woodwork like *khutamband* and *tabdan tarashi* (lattice work) during medieval times. Papier mache, wood carving and metal work made by them have established their name and fame throughout the world. They have been traditionally producing carpets and a variety of fine embroidery, from *Sozni* to chainstitch in fascinating colours and designs.

Although the natural environment overwhelmed the artisan, yet the human dispensation in which he was placed was cruel and unjust. He was hounded by battalions of *Kardars* for taxes beyond his means. The entrepreneur, the *Khwaja* tyrannized and exploited him so much so that he was forced to voluntarily cut off his fingers to avoid taking up the shawl weaving as a craft once again. The peasant took to roving after deserting his field, the artisan shunned the craft and went to the dusty plains of the Punjab in search of a living. The situation has somewhat reversed now, but the artisan continues to be exploited.

Much of the material for the early part of the analysis undertaken, had to be dug out from the chronicles and interpretations given and inferences drawn from the factual material available in these chronicles.

Detailed works of foreign authors are available about the contribution of the ancient world civilizations to the field of arts and crafts. These works have been taken use of for determining the position of the artisan of Kashmir among these civilizations.

Due to the limitations of appropriate means at my disposal which could help in being more creative, I cannot claim to be beyond shortcomings. But I am sure, that I have succeeded in pointing towards a direction in which an indepth research is required. This difficult but challenging task can be and should be taken up by the young researchers in future.

I am thankful to my nephew Sri H.L. Fotedar for going through the manuscript and making valuable suggestions and my elder daughter, Sunita Dhar for taking pains in preparing the index and to my younger daughter, Neera Dhar for arranging typing and correction work of the volume.

June '99
New Delhi

D.N. Dhar

Chapter I

PLACE OF KASHMIR ARTISANS IN THE ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS OF THE WORLD

"These then are the elemental lands—China, India, Babylonia and Egypt. In these countries civilization was invented. History begins with them'."

GREAT CIVILIZATIONS AROUND RIVER BASINS

A photograph of the Earth between the Western Himalayas and the Mediterranean (from 30° to 85° longitude east of Greenwich and 10° to 40° latitude north of Equator) would expose a vast area of sandy deserts, rugged mountains and river valleys. Partly over the rocks and partly through the valleys, one would observe long streaks running north to south and south to north. To the discerning eye, these streaks could be none other than the great rivers—the Tigris and the Euphrates, the Nile and the Indus. Interestingly, around the basins of these great rivers, the most ancient civilizations of the world, apart from China, were born. On the banks of the Nile, the land of pyramids, symbolising the ancient civilization of Egypt, came into being and in the basins of Tigris and the Euphrates were founded the "Garden of Eden" which represented the peak of Mesopotamian Civilization, hammered and shaped in the lap of the "Fertile Crescent" at Sumer, Akkad and Babylonia. In the basin of the Indus, in the Indian sub-continent, was excavated from under a mound (known as Mohenjo-daro, Mound of the dead) a civilization older than any yet known to historians. And long before the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were enacted on the soil of India, the Indus Valley Civilization had already passed into the dustbin of history.

It is the mighty and capricious character of these rivers that made the ancient man to struggle and invent civilization, taking advantage of their waters and the deposits of silt, enriching the soil of these river valleys. In fact the rivers have been great educators, the teachers. Egypt, Babylonia and India are the prime countries of the ancient world. "In these three desert-bound water valleys, we find, in the earliest dawn of history, civilization growing wild. Each in a similar manner had been fostered and tortured by nature into progress; in each existed a people skilled in the management of land, acquainted with manufactures, and possessing some knowledge of practical science and art²."

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION DUG OUT

It was in A.D. 1925 owing to the untiring efforts of two geologists, G. Brunton and Gertrude Canton-Thompson, a rich and ancient civilization was brought to light in an excavation at Badri between Cairo and Carnak in Egypt. A culture prior to the first historical dynasties in Egypt was dug out—a culture somewhere between the hunting and agricultural stage. To this stage of human development in Egypt goes the credit of baking clay pots in ovens and carving combs and spoons out of hippopotamus tusk. The excavations showed that they knew the art of pictographic writing and drawing of pictures of



Map 1 : *The Euphrates and the Tigris*

animals³. The people also knew the art of making boats and domesticating animals. They even produced cylinder seals like the Sumerians.⁴

Yet in other excavations carried out by E. W. Gardner and Gertrude Canton-Thompson in A.D. 1925 at Fayum (North of lower Egypt) and at Merimde-Beni-Sallam in A.D. 1928 by Junker and Menghin, articles of jewellery, needles made of bones, fishing hooks and ladles were dug out. The excavations showed dwelling places made of wicker, reed mats and wood constructed in circular shapes.

At Negade, in upper Egypt, an excavation uncovered a civilization as old as 3500 to 3000 B.C. It was called the Negade Civilization. Articles of copper, a harpoon and a fishing tackle were excavated. The second Negade period dug out at one more site existed between 3000 and 2600 B.C. Here a copper axe, copper basins and sewing needles were found.

Egyptians were the first to learn how to carry huge stones and erect the fantastic pyramidal buildings. Zoser was one of the Pharoas to construct the first huge monumental pyramid, Step Mastaba out of a natural stone. It was 2600 years before Christ "Many mummies have waited 5000 years for their resurrection, yet research has established that the soles of mummified feet 2000 or 3000 years old are still soft and pliable⁵."

SUMERIAN AND BABYLONIAN CIVILIZATIONS

Up in the north, in the Fertile Crescent called Mesopotamia, in the valleys between the Tigris and the



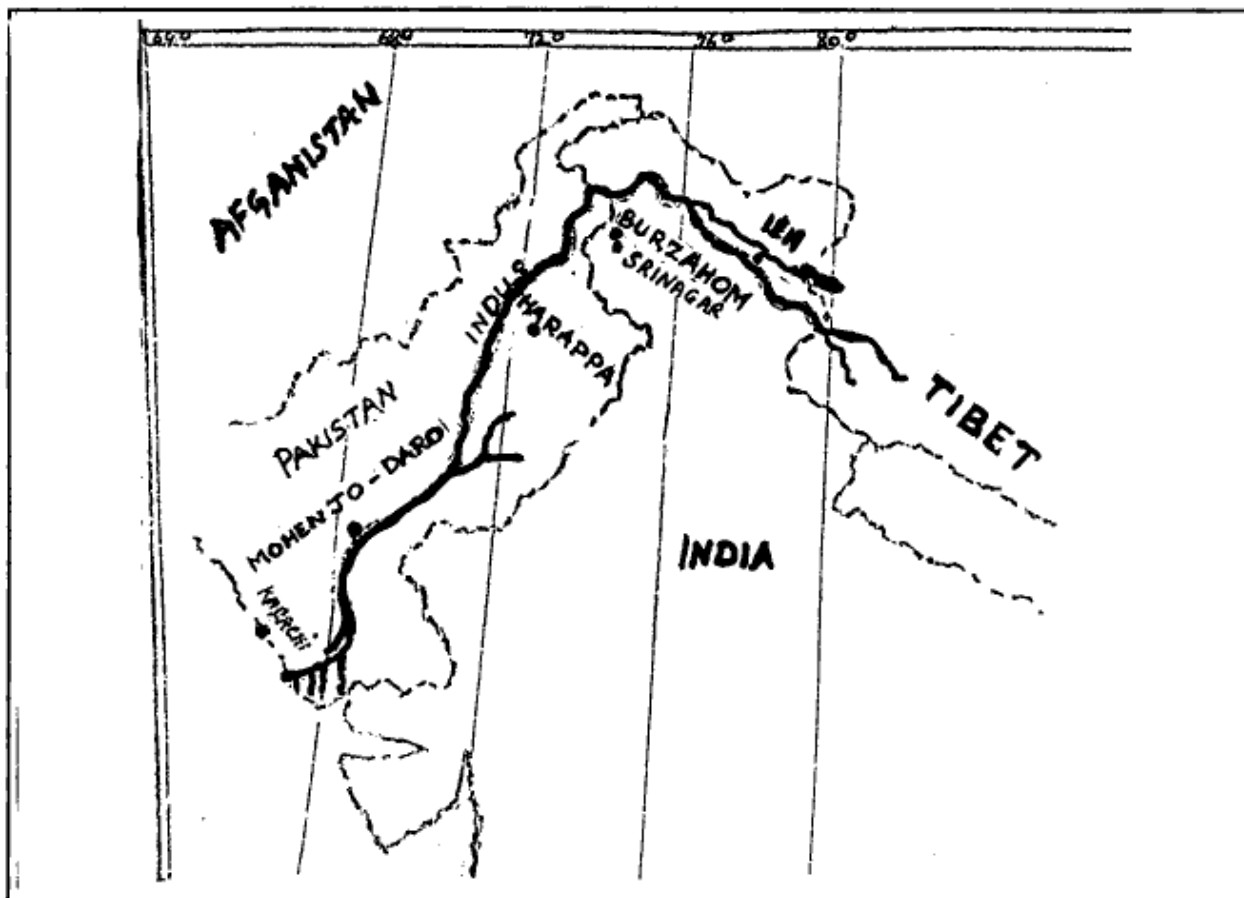
Map 2 : The Nile

Euphrates, developed one of the most advanced civilizations of the world, the Sumerian and the Babylonian.

Between A.D. 1922 and 23, two hundred and twenty miles from Baghdad at Ur, Leonard Woolly, unearthed a royal cemetery with 850 graves. These graves date back to 2500 B.C.⁶ Their excavation throws light over the antiquity of the Sumerian Civilization. Sumer was the capital city of this civilization. It covered the region from modern Baghdad to the Persian Gulf, in between the two rivers — the Tigris and the Euphrates.

In the territory fortified by the Iranian plateau from the east and marshes east of the Tigris from the west, with the modern town of Shushan in Iran (Susa as its ancient name) as its central point, there lived a people called Elomites. In this area was dug out by a French archaeologist, a very ancient civilization, with evidence of a culture as old as 4,500 B.C.⁷ Here we find the appearance of the potters wheel and the wagon wheel for the first time. It appeared to be an advanced civilization which traded with Egypt and India.⁸ "In the midst of chipped flints that brings us back to Neolithic Age, we find finished vases elegantly rounded and delicately painted with geometric designs⁹." Elomites conquered Sumeria and Babylonia, who in turn were conquered by them. It may be that the excavations at Ur had something to do with Elomites. Among Woolly's discoveries of which Sumerians can be proud of, were the harps and layers, white marble drinking vessels, bowls and basins of modern design and the *Ram in blossoming tree*¹⁰ in which precious metals and coloured stones were used. Sumerians used copper, bronze and even iron implements¹¹. Needles and awls were made of ivory.¹²

The Babylonians were ethnically a union of Sumerians and Akkadians. Their mating generated Babylonian type.¹³ Babylonians were called as such because their capital was at Babylon. The Semitic quality of Akkadians led to a warfare between the two which resulted in the victory of Akkadians and the establishment of Babylon as their capital. Babylonia actually developed the Sumerian civilization and carried it to heights. Their contribution to astronomy, mathematics, physics, medicine, law, philosophy and



Map 3 : The Indus

methodology is unparalleled. They developed their tools from stone to bronze and then to iron long before the end of last millennium prior to Christ. They exported woollen and cotton textiles which were dyed and embroidered; these were praised and valued for their beauty and elegance. They manufactured tapestry and carpets and then exported them¹⁴. The golden period of Babylonia lasted, with certain interruptions, from 1750 to 562 B.C.¹⁵."

ANATOLIA

There flourished a few junior civilizations around the Mesopotamian belt. Three thousand feet above sea level, over the bend of Red River, Anatolia was inhabited by a people known as Hittites. Hottusa, a place east of Ankara, was their capital. A civilization four thousand year old¹⁶ was dug out on the plateau of Anatolia in Turkey between A.D. 1906 and 1912, by the German Oriental Institute. The excavations were resumed in 1931 under the guidance of Prof. Kurt Bittel. A city with walls around it was dug out. Inside the citadel, the Hittites had stored their archives, where about 3294 clay tablets were found. In a corner were dug out the bones of a young girl, with a gold ring on her right ear and a bronze bracelet on her forearm.

MINOAN CIVILIZATION

During the last decade of the 19th century Dr. Arthur Evans, a British archaeologist, carried out an excavation in Crete, where he dug out massive palaces with frescoes on their walls. These palaces were

built by Knossos, Phaistos and Mallia, the ancient princes of Crete. The palaces were as old as 2100 years B.C.¹⁷ Evans called it as Minoan civilization. Other towns in Crete were also been dug out. The finds include carpenters' and shoemakers' workshops, smithies and potteries, besides water supply facilities and a drainage system.

TROY BROUGHT TO LIFE STONE BY STONE

Similarly, Dorpfeld and his associate Pergamum dug out Hissarlik in Greece to bring to life ancient Troy stone by stone and they proved that the Heroic Epic *Iliad* existed in fact in stone, gold, and flesh and blood.¹⁸

CIVILIZATION AROUND HWANG-HO

The earliest civilization in China developed in the region around the river Hwang-Ho. The people faced with the challenges thrown up by this river, steeled through a tough period which led to the development of a civilization here. Nothing in detail is known about the culture they developed. Chicken-Bone Hill discovery in A.D. 1929 established from the yellow ash that Peking man already had the knowledge of fire. It showed that about three thousand bones had been shaped uniformly by human hands and could, therefore, presuppose a small industrial centre. Shaping of many quartz stones, showed that powerful hammer had been used. The early inhabitants of this region were artists. Girls were already wearing necklaces 3000 to 5000 years ago.¹⁹ China was familiar with the use of jade as back as 2500 B.C. as it was found in most ancient graves.²⁰ Bronze is as old as jade.²¹

SHANG CIVILIZATION — THE EARLIEST CIVILIZATION IN CHINA

Archaeological evidence shows that the Shang Civilization was the earliest civilization that existed in China. Shang rulers are supposed to have ruled between 1965 and 1122 B.C. By 14th century B.C. Shang people had developed a culture as superior to any other in the world. In areas like cutting of jade and hard stones, they excelled all. "In textile and metal work, the craftsmen of China, during and after the Sung Era, reached a high degree of perfection..."²² There is evidence to show that Shang people even used silk. This civilization was responsible for developing the Ideographic Script and the Solar-Lunar Calendar.

INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

From deep in the great Himalayan region, high on the plateau of Tibet rises the mighty Indus. Roaring through many high mountain gorges, passing through Leh, reaching the 26th parallel of latitude, it traverses the plains of the Indian subcontinent and finally joins the Arabian Sea at Karachi. It has been flowing like this from times immemorial, though sometimes running out of its course, causing both destruction and regeneration. In a region called the Garden of Sindh, a narrow strip between the main bed of the Indus and Western Nara Canal in Larkana district, there existed a mound named Mohenjo-daro or the Mound of the Dead. During A.D. 1922 when an Indian archaeologist R.D. Banerji was making efforts to excavate a Buddhist monastery dating back to A.D. 3090, he found that bricks used in its construction belonged to an older period and that under the monastery lay buried an ancient city.

In A.D. 1924 Sir John Marshall, a world renowned archaeologist, inspired the world by declaring that his Indian aides, particularly, R.D. Banerji had discovered a civilization older than any other yet known to historians. He had dug out both at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa in the Punjab four or five superimposed cities. This civilization extended "Westwards up to the Iranian border, eastwards beyond Delhi and southwards to the Gulf of Broach"²³. These excavations represent the oldest examples of

town planning. Along the wide streets and narrow lanes, the houses stood in lines provided with a type of modern drainage system. Sir John Marshall himself asserts:

These discoveries establish the existence in Sindh (the northern most part of Bombay Residency) and the Punjab during the fourth and third millennium B.C. of a highly developed city life, and the presence in many of the houses of wells and bathrooms as well as an elaborate drainage system, betoken of social condition of their citizens at least equal to that found in Sumer and superior to that prevailing in contemporary Babylonia and Egypt.. Even at Ur the houses are by no means equal in point of construction to those of Mohenjo-daro.²⁴

As to the antiquity of the Indus Valley Civilization and the culture it represents, one thing is glaringly clear. It bore a striking resemblance to Sumerian and Mesopotamian cultures. The use of copper and bronze vessels, kiln burnt bricks, potters wheel, pictorial writings and above all the developed city life are the common feature of these civilizations. When Sumerian towns were dug out in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, archaeologists found seals and pieces of broken pottery which they thought, unmistakably originated in the ancient cities of the Indus.²⁵ Dates had been already settled in case of Sumerian culture due to the deciphering of the Cuneiform script of Sumerian inscriptions and it was not therefore, difficult for experts to deduce the dates for the Mohenjo-daro and Harappan culture from the layers of the earth, which the Indus seals, shared with Sumerian objects. The graves dug at Ur in Sumeria, were 4500 years older than the first dynasty of Ur. But Prof. Leonard Woolly who dug out the graves puts it somewhere between 3400 and 3100 B.C. It is believed that Sumerians lived 3500 B.C. onwards.²⁶

Likewise Henri Frankfort in an excavation at an Elamite village, Babylonia, found (A.D. 1932) some pottery seals and beads which he felt had been imported from Mohenjo-daro sometimes in 2000 B.C. This view is confirmed by Sir John Marshall.

With regard to the seniority of these civilizations in history, there exist conflicting views. While Hall believes that it was the Indus culture which had been imbibed by the Sumerians²⁷, Macdonell, on the other hand puts it reversely.²⁸ It is probable that both the civilizations existed at one and the same period of history and grew independently with some sort of contact. Interestingly, investigations have revealed identical seals found in the Indus valley and Babylonia belonging to the pre-Sumerian period of Mesopotamian culture but to the latest period of Indus Valley culture²⁹. This alludes to the fact that the Indus Valley Civilization existed sometime prior to the Sumerian. Whatever may be the truth, the fact remains that the Indus Valley Civilization is one of the most ancient civilizations of the world. Deciphering of the Indus Valley script may shed further light on this civilization.

BURZAHOM' CULTURE 4,325 YEARS OLD

One of the states at the top of India lying to the north west of Himalayas, with an area of 86,023 sq. miles, extending from 32° 17' to 36° 58' N and from 73° 30' to 80° 30' E is called the Jammu and Kashmir state. It is topographically divided into three regions - the high mountainous area of the north and the east, the Valley and the low hilly and plain areas of Jammu.

Through the valley flows the Vitasta (the Jhelum). It is in this valley of Kashmir, near the famous Dal Lake at Burzahom that an excavation was carried in A.D. 1950. Earlier a trial excavation had been carried by a Cambridge expeditionary party in 1935. The culture found there is as old as 4325 years, nearly as earliest as other ancient civilizations of the world. The carbon 14 dating tests obtained from various samples from the excavation, give the following results:³⁰

Index no. of the sample		Radio carbon dates	
TF	15	3492	+ 108
TF	129	3775	+ 100
TF	13	3800	+ 128
TF	14	3975	+ 350
TF	127	4050	+ 115
TF	123	4175	+ 115
TF	128	4325	+ 120

Courtesy: Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

Dates can be arrived at by subtracting 1950 year from the dates in the table.

The Burzahom culture appears to be an equally ancient one as the Harappan or Mesopotamian. The only difference is in the stage of development. While the Harappan and Mesopotamian cultures were far advanced, the culture of Burzahom is only a neolithic culture at an advanced stage. It appears on its way to enter the Bronze Age. Along with many sophisticated stone implements, a copper arrow was also found. Stone blade industry appears to be absent. Perhaps this culture was at a stage where they were attempting at an alternative medium for tools, the metals. Coarse grey and brown pottery has been found. Pottery was also found in advanced Mesopotamian and Indus Valley Civilizations.

In the evolution of man there are no hard and fast lines to divide the various stages of development. There are periods when cultures are mixed. Elomites, who had first emerged from the nomadic life of hunting and fishing showed evidence of a superior culture. "In the midst of chipped flints that brings us back to the Neolithic Age, we find finished vases elegantly rounded and delicately painted with geometrical designs or with picturesque representations of animals and plants. Some of this pottery is ranked among the finest ever made by man³¹." In the Burzahom excavations too the remains belonging to three cultural complexes have been found - the Neolithic, the Neolithic-Megalithic and early historic.³²

BURZAHOM MAN COMPARED WITH HARAPPAN MAN

It is not carbon dating tests alone which have proved the antiquity of the Burzahom culture but also the comparison of skeletal remains with other Neolithic sites — Tekkala Kota, Nagarjuna Konda and Piklihal. Ten human burials sites were found almost complete. The comparisons of the Crania showed that Burzahom crania is, on the whole, more close to the Harappan cemetery R. 37 series than other Neolithic series of India. On the basis of marked similarity in head breadth, horizontal circumference, sagittal transversal arc, orbital breadth, palatal breadth, length breadth index³³, Arbinda Basu and Anadi Pal, after a detailed data analysis, came to the following conclusion:

From a comparison of metric traits as recorded, it seems to be a plausible conclusion to say that the Burzahom people are more similar to Harappan people of Southern India. The resemblance of a number of morphological characters traced between the Burzahom series and Neolithic culture and cemetery R. 37 series of the mature Harappan culture, most probably reflects their genetic affinity and probably also hints towards an ethnic continuity. This suggests that in spite of cultural drift, the basic long headed element continued to exist.³⁴

Besides, very strong traces of Tantrism have been found in the material remains of the Indus Valley Civilization.³⁵ The Tantra has also been the ancient tradition of Kashmir which has been carried along by the people to this day. The distorted version of this Tantra is traceable in the *Vatak Puja* of Kashmiri Hindus. The use of such symbols as were found in the Indus Valley excavations is prevalent even to-day.

What debars a decisive conclusion on the issue is that the Neolithic culture of Burzahom is comparatively free from the Indian chalcolithic traits.³⁶ Also the remains which have been compared for cranial comparisons are too few and far too incomplete to arrive at a decisive conclusion. There are features alluding to the living conditions which are comparable to the conditions in north and north-west of China. Such features, for example are the pit-dwellings and burial customs traced in the Burzahom culture. May be these particular features exist because of climatic difference between tropical and cold regions.

Lack of conclusive evidence available out of Burzahom excavations has led Allchin and Allchin to opine "...although this culture must have co-existed with the pre-Harappan and Harappan developments in the Indus valley and Punjab there is no indication that the two enjoyed any contact whatsoever." However the recent finds of Harappan remains at Akhnoor³⁷, Jammu, prompts for a fresh look over the whole question, more so because Kashmir Neolithic culture flourished at the same time.³⁸

Near Jammu, at Akhnoor, an established Harappan settlement has been recently excavated at Manda. The discovery was the consequence of a chance find of a rare coin of an Indo-Greek king, by Major General Jacob in 1973. He informed the Archaeological Survey of India at Jammu. A small trial digging yielded Harappan pottery at the lowest level. Encouraged by the results, the Director General Archaeological Survey of India ordered a major operation in 1977 under his personal supervision. The digging was done at the highest portion of the mound. A three-tier sequence of the Harappan culture was brought to light.

"The arrival of Harappans at Manda is marked by the typical pre-Harappans sturdy red ware and fans with thick horizontal bands indicative of pre-defence sequence of the already recognized excavated sites.³⁹" The Harappan pottery includes jars, dishes, dish on stands, beakers and goblets. Other things found are bone-arrow heads, graffiti marked shreds, balls and terracotta items. Small chert blades, pestles, querns and saddles were also a part of these finds.

The most conspicuous and important find is the double spiral-headed copper pin which has wide distribution. The pin has a clear West-Asian affinity. Even in the Kashmir valley a copper pin was found in excavations at a Neolithic site at Gufkral in the Tral area of Pulwama district. This is patently indicative of the fact that there either there was contact between the two cultures or this area also formed a part of the Harappan culture. Perhaps because of climatic conditions their way of living was different.

Whatever thorough investigations will reveal, one thing is established beyond doubt that Burzahom and other excavations made in Kashmir and Jammu present enough evidence for placing Kashmir among the ancient-most cultures of the world.

Initially man was bound to accept what nature offered to him. He ate fruits, wore animals skins and furs and lived in caves. He imitated animals for tools, observing the functioning of tusks, claws and teeth. From the shells of the sea he made cups, plates and spoons. The plant world provided him material for needle, tong, knife, pincer and shaft. In fact bark and grass fibers were woven by him into clothing after learning from experience of a spider and the nest of a bird. Probably weaving was one of the earliest arts of the human race⁴⁰. Weaving soft branches into baskets subsequently led to the art of pottery. He placed clay on wicker work to save it from burning. The clay hardened on the fire. That was how pottery was born. It is in this field that man, once a hominid, for the first time, used his hands to create beautiful forms.

CHINA MAN—AN ARTIST

The Chinese did not accept any distinction between an artist and an artisan. They believed that nearly

all industry was manufacture and all manufactures were handicraft; industry like art, was the expression of personality in things⁴¹. They preferred denying the glut of goods produced through large-scale industry to their people and continued with their artistic taste and creation of beautiful objects for daily use. The Chinese have a conviction that every thing around them should be aesthetic. So he produced the finest pieces of pottery and porcelain. He had no rivals in the art of cutting jade and hard stones. Chinese also excelled in producing many items of careful art like elegant fans out of feather, painted paper or silk. The art of lacquer work also originated from China and reached to perfection in Japan. Textile crafts of China also reached near perfection.

GIGANTIC PYRAMIDS

It was 4500 years ago, that the Egyptian man moved boulders to erect gigantic pyramids and created beautiful forms with the help of stone-chisels. Even in minor arts he was highly skilled. At the famous Badri excavations, exquisitely painted pottery has been found. "They carved such excellent products as the *Gibbet-el-Arak* knife⁴²." A little jewel casket belonging to 2575 B.C. was found from a ramp down in the vault where the burials of the dead one are laid. The jewel casket contained the following articles: twenty one gold armbands, a gold necklace, a pair of gold tweezers and a golden seashell.⁴³ It was noteworthy to observe that two halves of the shell were found with a hinge and overlapped perfectly well. The shell was of pure gold. This was a specimen of the goldsmith's skill in Egypt 4500 years ago. Today this shell adorns the museum at Cairo.

The Egyptians also devoted their attention to the beautification of their homes. For floorings and dressings they used rugs made by weavers, cushions and tapestries of beautiful designs and colours which Syrians continue to import to this day.⁴⁴ So also has been found the luxurious Egyptian furniture from the tomb of Tuton Khuman. Chairs, beds and other items of excellent workmanship and design have been found. The Egyptians made boats and carriages of wood. They even made coffins that almost invited men to die.⁴⁵

In upper Egypt, polished red ceramic wares with white ornamentation were found with pictures of animals, birds, ships and trees painted over them. All these articles belonged to the Negade Civilization which thrived between 3500 and 3000 B.C.

From the earliest dynasties, the Egyptian artisans made paper, mats, ropes and sandals from the papyrus plant. They were finest tissues. "a weave so fine that it requires a magnifying glass to distinguish it from silk; the best work of modern machine loom is coarse in comparison with this fabric of the ancient handloom."⁴⁶

FIRST POTTERS WHEEL IN SUMERIA

The earliest potters wheel has been found with Elamites in Sumeria. It was found only later in Babylonia and still later in Egypt. Imagine a potter sitting at the wheel transforming his personality just with a few deft touches to dead clay. Here the potter produced the most elegant ware delicately painted with fine designs and picturesque representations of animals and plants. Some of this pottery is ranked among the finest ever made by man.⁴⁷

At Ur, south of modern Baghdad, in the royal burial-ground, Prof. Leonard Woolly found necklaces, rings, bracelets, amulets with fascinating colours, a shell powder and a little reticule of blue malachite which belonged to Queen Shubad. In addition to golden bowls of beautiful designs, figurines of metal, stones and wood were unearthed. Drinking vessels and bowls dexterously cut and shaped into extraordinary designs by the artisans of that time have also been found. Use of precious metals and stones was also not uncommon.

BABYLONIANS SURPASS IN TEXTILES

Babylonian artisans surpassed everyone in textiles, especially tapestry and carpets. The tissue which the Babylonian artisan produced at the turn of the last millennium before Christ "became one of the most valued exports of Babylonia, praised to the skies by the writers of Greece and Rome."⁴⁸ They wove both woollen and cotton stuff, dyed and embroidered.

Similarly did the Anatolian artisan produced excellent bronze and gold ornaments. The artisans of Crete likewise produced fine potteries, symithies, wooden forms and footwear.

INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION EXCELLED IN CRAFTSMANSHIP

The artisans of the Indus Valley Civilization, in certain spheres, excelled all the ancient civilizations. Their pots and vessels show an advanced technique and production in variety of designs. From the finds, it appears that the Indus Valley artisan enjoyed a fairly long tradition of craftsmanship. Egyptians and Sumerians could stand no comparison.⁴⁹ These vessels were made either on potters wheel or worked out of copper, bronze, silver and porcelain. Their shone-carving was superior to Sumerians.⁵⁰ Similarly according to the well considered opinion of Sir John Marshall "The jewellery of these Indus people is so perfectly and brilliantly cut that it could more easily have originated in London's present day Bond Street than in pre-historic houses over 3,000 years ago."⁵¹

Other articles of craftsmanship excavated were pottery seals, beads, terracotas, dice, chess-men, engraved seals, copper models of two wheeled carts and the nude statute of a dancing girl in bronze. A few stone images with excellent finish comparable to Greeks have also been found. Unearthing of spindles confirms the craft of spinning and weaving those days.

So famous were the goods produced by Indian craftsmen, that they found markets in distant lands; this tradition is as old as history.⁵² There existed trading contact between India, Egypt and Sumeria as far back as 3000 B.C.⁵³ A caravan route was opened between Babylon and India via Bokhara or Balk and Sumerkand.⁵⁴ Between 700 and 480 B.C. there was flourished trade and commerce between India and Babylon through the Persian Gulf.⁵⁵

The contribution of Indian craftsmen to the development of human civilization has, perhaps, been the greatest, India as "a land of desire" has contributed much to the development of man. "On the routes of Indian caravan, as on the banks of navigable rivers, arose great and wealthy cities, which perished when the route was changed. Open any book of history, at whatever period you may be, it is always the India trade which is the cause of internal industry and foreign negotiation".⁵⁶

BURZAHOM MAN AT A STAGE OF CULTURAL TAKE OFF

Burzahom culture in Kashmir, according to carbon 14 dating tests, existed between 3492 and 4325 years ago. But the material remains of this culture do not show any evidence which could prove the presence of a variety of crafts except pottery, etc. Pottery items of various shapes and designs have been found. Lower layers of the excavation "yielded a type of highly polished black-ware and potsherds with incised geometrical designs."⁵⁷ The pottery forms were both in grey and brown black colours.⁵⁸ It was all done by hand. "... Neolithic man did not know potter's wheel, but with his own hands he fashioned clay into forms of beauty as well as use, decorated it with simple designs and made pottery, almost at the outset, not only an industry but an art⁵⁹." As explained elsewhere, Burzahom culture represented a transition between an advanced and less advanced cultures, a stage of cultural take off. Evidence from other fields could prove subsequent advancement of this culture.

THE SHAWL AS A PART OF THE CARAVAN TRADE (18TH CENTURY B.C.)

As back as the 18th century B.C., when Egypt was invaded by Hyksos, who exiled the Pharaohs, and

when it had not as yet come into contact with Europe, commercial activity in Egypt was carried on entirely by means of caravans. "From Arabia Felix came a long train of camels laden with gems of that aromatic land, and with more precious produce of countries far beyond with pearls of Persian Gulf and the carpets of Babylon, the pepper and ginger of Malabar, the shawls of Kashmir..."⁶⁰

That there were commercial relations between India and Babylon via Persian Gulf as far back as 700 B.C. is otherwise also confirmed.⁶¹

But the carbon 14 dating tests show that the Burzahom culture existed between 3492 and 4325 years ago and the period around 1800 B.C. could fall nearer this range of time and an article like a Kashmir shawl could not have been a part of this culture. At the same time Burzahom remains do not throw light on the whole range of articles of common use required by man living there; least of all his clothing. Being a cold area, it could be possible that he wore some woollens made by his hands. Subsequent historical evidence, though at a later date, shows that Kashmir shawl was exported many centuries before Christ. During the period of later Samhitas, Brahmanas and Upanishads, among other things, we are told of woollen garments, robes dyed with saffron and silk raiment⁶² being in use in India. It had been a tradition with Persian kings to decorate their pavilion in the battlefields with Kashmiri shawls. Before 300 B.C. when Darius III headed his army in the battlefield, "... a little after day break, a trumpet sounded, and the image of the sun, cased in crystal and made of burnished gold, was raised on the top of the king's pavilion, which was built of wood, covered with Cashmere shawls, and supported on silver poles⁶³."

What could have been the standard of quality of the Kashmir shawl which formed a part of caravan trade with Egypt has not been mentioned anywhere. May be it was the crude texture, but being very soft and warm due to the superior quality of wool available in this part of the world, it was in great demand with members of royal families. Even Will Durant in his *Oriental Heritage* refers to the ancient glory of Kashmir's textile craft. "...Directly at the northern tip of India, is the province of Kashmir of whose very name recalls the ancient glory of India's textile craft."⁶⁴ Babylonia produced wool as early as 400 B.C.⁶⁵ and women of Western Asia spun threads of wool by twirling a hand-held spindle and wove it on a horizontal loom.⁶⁶ West Asia was passing through the Neolithic Age at that time. It would not, therefore, be something unusual if the life of Kashmir shawl is established beyond 1800 B.C.

Heun Tsang gives a detailed description of types of cloth used for clothing in Kashmir. This includes cotton, silk and *pashmina* materials. He says, "their garments are made of Kaiu-She-Ye (Kansheya) and of cotton. Kaiu-She-Ye, is the product of the wild silkworm. They have garments also of *Ts'o-Mo* (Kashaumo) which is a sort of hemp; garments also made of Kien-Po-Lo (Kambla) which is woven from fine goat hair; garments also made from Ho-La-Li (Karala) this stuff is made from the fine hair of wild animals; it is seldom this can be woven, and therefore the stuff is very valuable and it is regarded as fine clothing⁶⁷." Karala is nothing but Pashmina.⁶⁸

The Kashmir chronicles and *Nilamata Purana* also contain some important references which point to the existence of fine woollen cloth or blankets for various uses. Even Bilhana in his historical poem *Vikramankadeva Carita*, while describing the beauty of Kashmir mentions how the ladies after taking bath at the river used the delicate stuff of the soft woollen shawls.⁶⁹ *Nilamata Purana* describing a practice to be followed on a certain festival says that on that day the *Linga* should be given a bath after removing its woollen covering.⁷⁰ The woollen covering wrapped around the *Linga*, a symbol of Lord Siva, could not but be a fine and soft woollen texture available during those times. This delicate piece of woollen cloth used with great reverence for the Lord could be a piece of Pashmina cloth. Among various names given to clothing in *Nilamata Purana* one is Kambala⁷² referred

to in connection with the festival of the New Snowfall appears to be the same thing as Prevara (mentioned in Mahabharata) offering protection against cold.⁷³ The gifts supplied to Northern India by Haimasvatas of Sabhaparvas of *Mahabharata* which most probably included Kashmiris, also included, among other things, smooth non-cotton textile pieces and woollen blankets⁷⁴. Such a view is strengthened by the tradition prevalent in Kashmir, that Kurus presented 10,000 shawls to Pandavas⁷⁵ and that Kashmiri shawl formed the part of the dowry of Sita.⁷⁶

There is mention of woollen blankets even in Rajtarangini in a piece of advice given by the great king Lalitaditya to his administration. He directed that villagers should not be allowed to grow into damaras by allowing them more food and oxen. They should not be allowed to possess ornaments, houses, horses and above all the woollen blankets which according to him were supposed to be appropriate for city people⁷⁷. Obviously these woollen blankets must have been adorning the rich in the town and the damara lords in the village. Again it must have been a blanket delicately woven from fine Pashmina wool. Many other opinions by various authors and those connected with shawl-making about the antiquity of the shawl are on record but without any reasonable evidence. For instance a French author takes the age of Kashmiri shawl to be four thousand years and says that shawls, "were worn by the proudest beauties at the Court of Caesar." Haji Mukhtar Shah Ashai, a well known shawl trader of Kashmir, is of the opinion that the shawl formed one of the items of trade during the reign of Ashoka.

BUDDHIST RUINS AT HARWAN

The Buddhist ruins dating back to 4th century A.D. at Harwan, Srinagar, show an advanced stage of development. The craftsman appears at his best. Moulded brick and terracotta tiles have been found. Presentation of complicated motifs on these tiles speak of the skill and the aesthetic level of the artisans of those times. The motifs depicted on the tiles are those of hunting horsemen, joyous men and women on a balcony, women wearing transparent robes with delicate scarves and large earrings, a lady carrying a flower vase, a female beating a drum and an armed horseman with a flying scarf attached to his uniform.⁷⁸

On the other hand, Ushkur excavations at Baramulla dating back to 4th — 8th century A.D.,⁷⁹ show terracotta heads, each a masterpiece, produced singly by hand and not by repetitive process, as the terracotas of Harwan. Each form appears a new creation produced with single-mindedness. The figurines show Gandhara influence.

The motifs on the tiles also show the existence of superior cloth as revealed by the transparent robes and the delicate sheen scarves. It shows that the craft of spinning and weaving was at its best. A flower vase could be either of copper, bronze or even earthen. An earring presupposes a goldsmith. A society in which people enjoy music and dance would naturally be an advanced one. Many arts and crafts flourished during this period. Such a conclusion is substantiated by historical records also.

REFERENCE OF CRAFTSMEN IN NILAMATA PURANA

Nilamata Purana, placed between 6th and 7th century A.D., refers to several items produced by craftsmen. Not only the crafts and craftsmen are mentioned but also their tools.⁸⁰ Articles of dress⁸¹ allude to the arts of spinning, weaving, dyeing and washing. Mention of ornaments, vessels made of gold and silver⁸² and silver stools⁸³ point to the existence of gold and silver smiths. Again, the reference to earthen⁸⁴ and wooden pitchers⁸⁵, wooden seats⁸⁶ and leather shoes⁸⁷ confirms the existence of various arts like pottery, carpentry and leather work. The terms used for dress are *vastra*⁸⁸, *ambara*⁸⁹ and *vasna*.⁹⁰ The term *cinamsuka* is used for Chinese silk. The women shown in transparent garments on Harwan tiles must have been made of either Chinese silk or silk produced in Kashmir. The sheen

scarves could have been made either of this silk or *pashmina*. *Kambala*⁹¹ is a woollen blanket. Mention is made of white and coloured clothes.⁹² Even bedsheet is referred to⁹³.

There are various rituals and practices which *Nilamata Purana* advises people to perform on various functions. These rituals throw light on the existence of a variety of crafts during that period. For instance in the month of *Asada* the statue of *Kesva* is required to be made out of clay, stone, gold, silver, brass, copper or wood⁹⁴. On *Shrada* ceremony a new silken cloth was to be given to the priest.⁹⁵ After bathing the *Linga*, a woollen covering had to be placed over it.⁹⁶ Arts and crafts were so important those days that *Nilamata Purana* provides for a ritual for worshipping *Viswakarma*, the originator of all crafts.⁹⁷ "*Vishwakarma*, Lord of the arts, master of a thousand crafts of the gods, and the builder of their palaces, divine fashioner of ever few first of craftsmen by whose art men live, and whom as great and deathless god, they continually worship⁹⁸." *Nilamata Purana* even provides the practice of worshipping the tools of the artisans.⁹⁹ Artisans are directed to undergo a fast on a particular day and thereafter take to worshipping of *Bhadrakali*.¹⁰⁰

In the evolution of man's culture the invention of smelting confined to copper and tin and in certain cases, their alloy. Such an invention facilitated the making of tools and weapons out of metals. Making of ornaments of gold and silver had already made a beginning. Ancient kings of Kashmir, being after conquering missions, weaponry was in great demand. The blacksmith did this job. At earlier stages handicrafts arose along with agriculture being the main occupation of the people. The crafts were confined to the homes of peasants who produced these for their personal use. With the passage of time, when agricultural surpluses were created, the arts and crafts received great boost and were produced for exchange. It led to their separation from agriculture and also the beginning of commodity production, exchange economy and commerce. It started with barter system first and then a type of money economy.¹⁰¹

With the growth of commerce, the country got bifurcated between the agricultural area and town. The town became the hub of commercial activity, mostly confined to handicrafts.

There came into existence, within the Indian socio-economic system, the *Janapada*¹⁰² and *Paura*¹⁰³, one representing agrarian centres and the other rich handicraft guilds. In Kashmir, although the division was, generally, on the same lines, yet there is no evidence of any craft guilds having been organised in ancient times. There is, however, evidence to show that there existed elaborate shopping complexes. Shops used to be decorated on the night of *Kartika Amavasya*.¹⁰⁴ Artisans and craftsman were held in great esteem in the society. They were given an important role in the yearly coronation rites of kings.¹⁰⁵

TRADE WITH CENTRAL ASIA

From the very first century of Christian Era, Kashmir had already entered the period of developed commercial activities. Between A.D. 78 and 3rd century A.D., the Kusans swayed North India including Kashmir. Kashmir had then brisk trade relations with central Asia¹⁰⁶ and traded with the plains of India down below. The bulk of people were engaged in trade rather than in agriculture.¹⁰⁷ The trade expanded enormously, so much so that the old *Uttara Patha* trade was extended into the heart of Central Asia.¹⁰⁸ The handicrafts of Kashmir formed the major chunk of this trade. Woollen and silken textiles and jewellery besides saffron were the articles of trade from Kashmir.

The merchants belonging to the towns were involved in luxurious handicraft trade, the peasants continued with the cottage crafts for their personal use and the village community exchanged surpluses through barter system. It was a stage of development in Kashmir when the features of feudal economy had not manifested. The artisan did not serve the big landholder or the manager of an *Agrahara*, with his handicrafts.

No doubt Kashmir was an important trade centre during this period when trade routes to Central Asia were open to it. But subsequently due to the rise of the Huns the routes were closed causing a set back to the flourishing trade. Again with the Muslim invasion of North India, whatever trade was carried with our western neighbours could not thrive any longer. Kashmir itself did not like the intrusion on its natural defences for its own interests. It kept a strong hold upon the entrances and roads leading into it. During the time of Alberuni, they did not allow even a Hindu to enter unless they knew him personally. Earlier they may have allowed one or two foreigners especially jews to enter their country.¹⁰⁹ Even Ou-Kong confirms that some of the trade routes were closed.¹¹⁰

It was only when big land-holders, the *Damaras*, made appearance and swelled in their ranks to become a powerful force, that an internal market was created for luxurious handicrafts. They rubbed shoulders with high ups in the administration and the members of the royal families. It was the gentry belonging to these classes which provided a limited market for handicrafts like jewellery and fine textiles. The *Damaras* had already made their influence felt during the time of Lalitaditya who feared that their influence could become a serious threat to the state power. Despite his warnings, they had grown unchecked and established their sway till the end of Hindu Rule. Although internecine warfare had proved a damper for the craftsmen yet they had by and large found a market for their handicrafts in the castles of *Damaras* and the palaces of kings.

KSEMENDERA AND KALHANA

By the end of Hindu rule in Kashmir, a variety of crafts had made appearance. Mention is made in Ksemendera's *Narmamala* and Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*. Kalhana gives the description of prosperous markets during king Nara's (Kimnara) time. He says, "On the sandy bank of *Vitasta*, he built a town where the markets were kept full of supplies by the high roads (leading to it) and where coming and going of ships (boats) gave splendour to the river"¹¹¹... Though established by tradition, the construction of the town by king Nara, lacks authentication. Kamlavati, the queen of the great king Lalitaditya, also established *Kamalahatta*¹¹² (meaning the market of Kamla). The premier market centres of those times were Purandhisthana, Prithihaspura, Huskapura and Praverapura.¹¹³ Kalhana's assertion made in the book eight of *Rajtarangini* proves indubitably that during the time of Jayasimha (A.D. 1128-49) market buildings were given as gifts by the kings to persons of his choice. Even the respectable *Purohita* of temples were granted this favour.¹¹⁴ Grant of shops to individuals and shrines is often mentioned in inscriptions.¹¹⁵

Repeated references in our chronicles have been made to *Dinara*¹¹⁶ *Hundika*¹¹⁷ (*Hundi*), *Dinarojjama*¹¹⁸ (bond of debt for cash) and *Dhanyhojjamacrica*¹¹⁹ (bond of debt for *Dhanya* or *shali*), *Dinarahundika*¹²⁰ (*Hundi* for cash) and *Dhanya Hundika*¹²¹ (*Hundi* for *Dhaniya*) show that Kashmir had well developed monetary system, a system of reckoning and even a system of coinage. A monetary system based on the cowree unit and represented in its main bulk by a copper coinage becomes far more intelligible if we realize that it was supplemented in all important transactions of public business and private life by ample stores of another circulating medium the *Khare* of rice.¹²² The presence of currency system is further substantiated by references made to the prices of commodities and the examples of exact amounts fixed as salaries for the officials in *Rajtarangini*. There is also the reference to a merchant having kept one lakh *Dinnaras* of a person, trying to grab the amount for having lent to him on credit on various occasions, small sums and charging interest¹²³ on them. It shows that there existed a system in which money could be given on credit and interest charged on the amount. Such a system was usurious. Ksemendera also makes mention of nipping money lenders. "Money lender was the mean mouse who tore away, the already tattered world of the peasant on perpetual need. Just as the mouse eats away the stuff of clothes, so did the money lender nibble at the poverty stricken peasant

cultivator."¹²⁴ Though, perhaps not regulated, the indigenous banking system existed during the Hindu period. Like the peasant cultivator, the craftsman must have benefitted and got exploited by the money lender.

The presence of markets, shopping complexes, business centres, a monetary system, method of reckoning, the bills of exchange (*Hundies*), the bonds of contract and the indigenous banking system provided suitable condition for the growth of luxurious handicrafts which received strong impetus with the growth of big land-holding class.

RAJTARANGINI REFERS TO THE CRAFTS OF ARTISANS

Ample evidence is available in *Rajtarangini* which shows that many articles of common use were produced by artisans in those days. Broadly these can be categorised as pottery, textiles, items produced from gold and silver including jewellery, copper and brass ware, stone work, glassware and leather goods. Fine woollen and silken textiles and items produced from gold and silver were in great demand in foreign markets especially in Central Asia and beyond.

Inside Kashmir these luxurious items found market in royal families, big land-holding classes, and families of merchants and bureaucrats. Items produced from the potters wheel, woodwork, copper and brass work were generally made for the common folk living both in villages and towns. Stone work was done by both the artisans and the masons. Artisans, generally produced, the beautiful figurines of gods and goddesses exhibiting great artistic skill. These were generally in demand for temples and religious festivals.

The merchant community was very rich. They possessed articles which even a king did not have. Once when the king, Pratipaditya, was invited by a merchant to his house, he found lamps formed of jewels (*Manidipika*)¹²⁵ lighting his house. The king himself used lamps in his palace which produced soot and caused headache. Big landholders, the *Damaras*, lived in castles like medieval barons. The castles were adorned with luxurious articles and their women folk displayed the finest jewellery and gold ornaments.

POTTERS RESPECTED

After the Harwan excavations, which unearthed a high quality pottery, no evidence is available which could show that such a fine product continued to be produced during later times. Obviously circumstances not favourable to the production of such high quality pottery seems to have intervened. Potters lived in poverty, but all the same, were revered and respected. A potter woman was so much trusted that king Pravrsena was entrusted to her care for his upbringing.¹²⁶ He even took birth in the hut of a potter woman. King Mihirkula wanted to divert the river Candrakulya, but a rock in the middle of the river created difficulties. The episode, as explained by the chronicler, Kalhana, says that the rock could be moved only after it was touched by a potter woman.¹²⁷ It shows that a potter must have been traditionally respected because of his skill and importance in the day-to-day life of the community. He continued to shape clay to produce articles of common use and such symbols as were required for ceremonies based on *Tantra*. Mention has been made by Ksemendra of earthen rings produced by potters.

ORNAMENTS OF PRECIOUS METALS

The work connected with precious metals, gold and silver continued as usual. Later period of *Rajtarangini* shows existence of silver articles like golden and silver figurines¹²⁸, golden couch¹²⁹, parasol of gold, golden statues, golden sticks¹³⁰, and golden armour¹³¹. King Lalitaditya got images of gods and goddesses prepared in gold and silver for various shrines¹³². His queen Kamlavati got

prepared a large silver image of *Kamla Kesava*.¹³³ A *Linga* made of jewels was recovered from the ashes of the Vijayasvara town when it was put on fire by the *Damaras*.¹³⁴ There existed a parasol of gold on the temple of Vijayesa.¹³⁵ Learning to put gold on copper from a well known artist from *Turushka* country, the artisans of Kashmir constructed a parasol with very small number of gold pieces for the *Kalasesa* temple during the time of king Kailasa.¹³⁶ He also got adorned the roof of Siva temple with cups of gold.¹³⁷ This shows that artisans of Kashmir possessed the skill in moulding precious metals into various shapes. Temples were mostly the places where the attractive figurines and statues found their place. Temples were, therefore, the targets of the greedy perverts. Anandgopala, a favourite of King Ananta, proposed to break all the golden statues of gods in temples.¹³⁸

Extensive use of gold, perhaps, could be attributed to the availability of the yellow metal in Kisanganga valley.¹³⁹ Gold was being kept in Government treasuries.¹⁴⁰ The amount of gold recovered from the debris of the fire at Vijayesvara town surpasses one's imagination. There existed a practice of marking gold according to the quality and price fixed by the government. This practice was later abolished by King Ananta.¹⁴¹ No wonder that the artisans tempering gold into attractive shapes were encouraged to do so. The ruling classes had interest in this craft because they enjoyed its benefits.

Encouraged by the demand from the upper strata of the society, the goldsmiths designed the ornaments of exquisite variety. There is mention of gold necklaces, bracelets, armlets, ear-rings, pendants, strings, diadem, *kataka* leaf, and *Amalaka* in *Rajtarangini*. Ladies of Harsha's court adorned their locks with *kataka* leaf and the golden strings tied at their ends with a pendant on their forehead.¹⁴² King Harsha himself wore earrings (*Tadi*) which flashed like the reflected image of the sun.¹⁴³ In his head dress he fixed a diadem.¹⁴⁴ Goldsmiths even designed *Amalaka* ornaments for decorating the palaces of kings and temples.¹⁴⁵ Presenting of gifts of gold had been very frequent. Queen Dida induced brahmins to break their fast by giving them presents of gold.¹⁴⁶ Even a *Domba* singer who gave a musical performance to King Cakravartan was found wearing golden necklaces and bracelets which were, perhaps, presented to him.¹⁴⁷

TEXTILES

Textile products of Kashmir had established name in ancient times. This is confirmed by Kalhana. He mentions *Pattan* being famous for weaving cloths.¹⁴⁸ Even to-day there is a place near Pattan named Kanihama which has been famous for producing *Kani-shawls*. Heun Tsang visited Kashmir in A.D. 631, when the first *Karkuta* king still ruled. He confirmed the production of garments made from *Hola-li* (*Pashmina*). Kashmiri craftsmen produced even rough woollens¹⁴⁹ for common use.

Silk was known in Kashmir from early times. There is mention of 'thread spun by worms' in the *Sabhaparva* of *Mahabharata* and its stuff having been presented by a feudatory prince from North-West of India (presumably Kashmir) to Yudhishtira.¹⁵⁰ *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* also makes a mention about it.¹⁵¹ There are references to it in Kalhana's chronicle also. Silk was also imported from China for producing delicate cloth. It was also exported. Craftsmen in Kashmir made the garments even from hemp.¹⁵² Cloth manufacture from various materials was so much in vogue in ancient Kashmir that government had to appoint one officer called the Superintendent of Clothing during King Kailasa's time.¹⁵³

COPPER & BRASS-WARES

The craftsmen connected with copper and brass-wares were in no case, less skilled. Since copper was available in mines, production of copper vessels was popular. The artisans also produced beautiful statues and small figurines from both copper and brass. King Lalitaditya got a statue of Buddha made

by his master craftsmen.¹⁵⁴ It was made of thousands of *prathas*¹⁵⁵ of copper. Lot many beautiful brass images which adorned so many *viharas* were seized by king Kailasa.¹⁵⁶ This king also destroyed the copper image of *Surya, Tamaraswamin*.¹⁵⁷

An over view study of these metal images reveal a continuity of stylistic trends and innovative iconography through the *Karkuta, Utpala* and *Lohara* periods of this age. "It is quite evident that the surviving metal pieces are only the slightest trace of a massive complex tradition. In terms of quality, it is easy to see from extant examples that many images rank among the best metal work produced in any culture."¹⁵⁸ Technical ability of the artisans is easily affirmable from the skill of the artisans in which the *Brhad Buddha* of Lalitaditya's time was cast. The alloy of copper and zinc used gives to the images a yellowish colour and a soft glow even when these are still un-gilded. "The primary evidence available indicates that the main stylistic thrust comes out of north-western India regions as seen in examples of pre-*Karkuta* period, as well as later pieces, which show strong affinities to the art of Gandhara, Bacteria and associated regions."¹⁵⁹

WORKING WITH WOOD

Wood being bountifully available in Kashmir, craftsmen produced articles of daily use besides the items of decoration from it. They also knew how to shape wood into various forms exquisitely beautiful. Carpenters built wooden houses, bathing huts, boats and bridges (*Navsetu*, bridge of boats). Praversena II got constructed a great bridge on *Vitasta* called *Brahatsetu*.¹⁶⁰ This shows how intelligent and skilled the carpenters were of that period. *Alamkara*, the superintendent of Treasury, under king Jaisimha, got constructed bathing huts (*sanankostha*) on the bank of *Vitasta*.¹⁶¹ Boats were the prime means of transport. The responsibility of fulfilling the needs of the community fell to the skilful carpenters. They had therefore, a vital role, both in village community and towns.

SUPERB STONE WORK

Kashmiri artisans have been superb in working on stone. The stone work could be either the work done by craftsmen or masons. As a craftsman he was very imaginative in his art and produced very beautiful forms. As a mason, he built huge temples, dams, dykes, embankments, *setus*, and walls. Under King Samadhimat, who was a great worshipper of Siva, elegant forms of bulls, *Trisula* and *Lingas* were made.¹⁶² For keeping his vow he got a thousand *Lingas* prepared by carving a rock all round which were visible even upto 12th century A.D. (Kalhana's time)¹⁶³. Under Pravarsena II, Jayandra got a colossal statue of Buddha cut and chiselled and erected by the artisans of that period.¹⁶⁴ The architect, Jaya, created the beautiful form of *Visnu*.¹⁶⁵ The wife of Megha Vahana also got a fine statue of Buddha prepared for a *vihara*.¹⁶⁶ Statues of Buddha were carved out of a stone by king Harsha and Sussala and then erected.¹⁶⁷ Small figurines of gods and goddesses were made by artisans as these were in demand for religious ceremonies also.

THE GREAT MARTANDA TEMPLE

A big temple was built by king Lalitaditya at Martanda. The ruins of this wonder creation of the architects of those times still exist in the valley of Kashmir. The temple is famous for its grandeur and architectural skill. The queen of Nand Gupta (A.D. 972-72) got constructed a beautiful *Vishnu* temple.¹⁶⁸ It was built of white stones and was known for the masterly skill of its builders. The *Martanda* and *Avantiswamin* temples are the testimony to the ability and vitality of the *Karkuta* and *Utpala* periods respectively. "Each of the shrines around the peristyle presumably contained an image of Vishnu in identical form to the central figure, each considered to be an emanation and reflection of the central deity. Neither more nor less than identical to him, they represented in graphic form his universality".¹⁶⁹ Not only temples were constructed but also dams,¹⁷⁰ embankments¹⁷¹ and dykes¹⁷² all made of stones.

ARTISAN PROSPEROUS

Economic condition of the artisans of Kashmir fluctuated with the change in the external and internal trading environment. Much earlier under Asoka and Kushan rule, the old *Uttara Patha* trade had extended up to Central Asia through Kashmir. In fact Kashmir had become a hub of entrepot trade which caravans from Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent carried with each other. Taking advantage of the geographical situation and the political dispensation which obtained then, Kashmir exported its own products to the trading centres in the north and the Indian subcontinent in the south. It lent great encouragement to the external trade of Kashmir. Opening up of vast markets required supply of goods in huge quantities. It augmented the production activity both horizontally and vertically which led to the prosperity of merchants and traders who in turn paid good price for the products by the artisans. It was perhaps during this period that Kashmir shawl was sent over the famous caravan route which "was also opened between Babylon and India via Bokhara or Balkh and Sumerkand¹⁷³." In this period of prosperity, artisans of Kashmir must have enjoyed good life with plentiful food and fine clothes.

COLLAPSE OF THE TRADE GIVES SETBACK TO ARTISANS

This trade equilibrium could not last long. With the rise of Huns and much later with the Muslim invasion of North India the tables were turned. All trade routes were closed. The prosperous trade collapsed, giving a serious setback to the artisan industry. In Kashmir, a land locked country, there was no scope for any industry exporting goods to foreign countries. All attention was diverted towards land from which one could earn a living. It was during this period that a class of land grabbers (*Damaras*) emerged slowly and in course of time grew up into a strong landed nobility challenging even the power of the king. The economic condition of the artisans during this period became miserable. They produced things for a very limited number of people of the royalty, the official class and some rich people. The artisans in the rural areas who produced mostly pottery, wood work, agricultural tools and leather work, continued to supply to the rural folk and exchanged goods on barter system. Their income dwindled with the state of agricultural produce. Some times floods and other natural calamities affected their earnings. However, the *Damaras* grew stronger with the course of time. They maintained their own army (foot soldiers) and led a luxurious life. To meet their huge expenditure they exploited land for higher incomes. They became richer and led a life of great pomp and show. Their ladies were aristocratic and there was great demand for jewellery and other precious wares for decorating their houses. The specialised class of artisans, who produced such things for the export market, were to an extent, given one more opportunity to produce and sell these things which they availed. Even though the old times never returned, yet a new life was given to arts and crafts of Kashmir and the artisans were able to earn a meagre living. Perhaps the momentum could have sustained for a longer period, had not the unscrupulous *Damaras* challenged the authority of kings and brought instability in the political system. The last nail was struck by Zulju's (Dulchu) invasion of Kashmir. He devastated Kashmir. A large number of craftsmen had been killed in the invasion.

WAGES AND MONETARY SYSTEM

The wages of the artisans in terms of money are evidenced nowhere in the chronicles in spite of the fact that there existed a system of coinage, a well developed money market and a system of reckoning. One thing which can be affirmed without any shadow of doubt is that the wages those days used to be paid in kind—in terms of *Khari* of rice. In Lokprakash, *Khari* of rice are shown in fixed quantities as payments of rents, fines, interest etc. Even up to recent times in Kashmir, wages were paid in kind. W. R. Lawrence who made the land settlement of Kashmir says, "In 1889 when I commenced work, it might be said that money price did not exist. Salaries were paid

in grain and remember that in 1889, I was requested to take oil seeds in lieu of cash in payment of salary of myself and my department... not only did the state pay its officials in grain but private persons paid their servants in the same fashion".¹⁷⁴

In fact the monetary system in ancient Kashmir was constituted of *cowrie* (unit), bulk of copper coinage and a *khari* of rice. There were also various types of promisory notes—*Hundis*. Silver and gold coins were rare and generally used for saving. Value was measured in terms of *kharis* of rice. In such an elaborate monetary system there could have been the peak periods of economic prosperity when people must have benefitted economically.

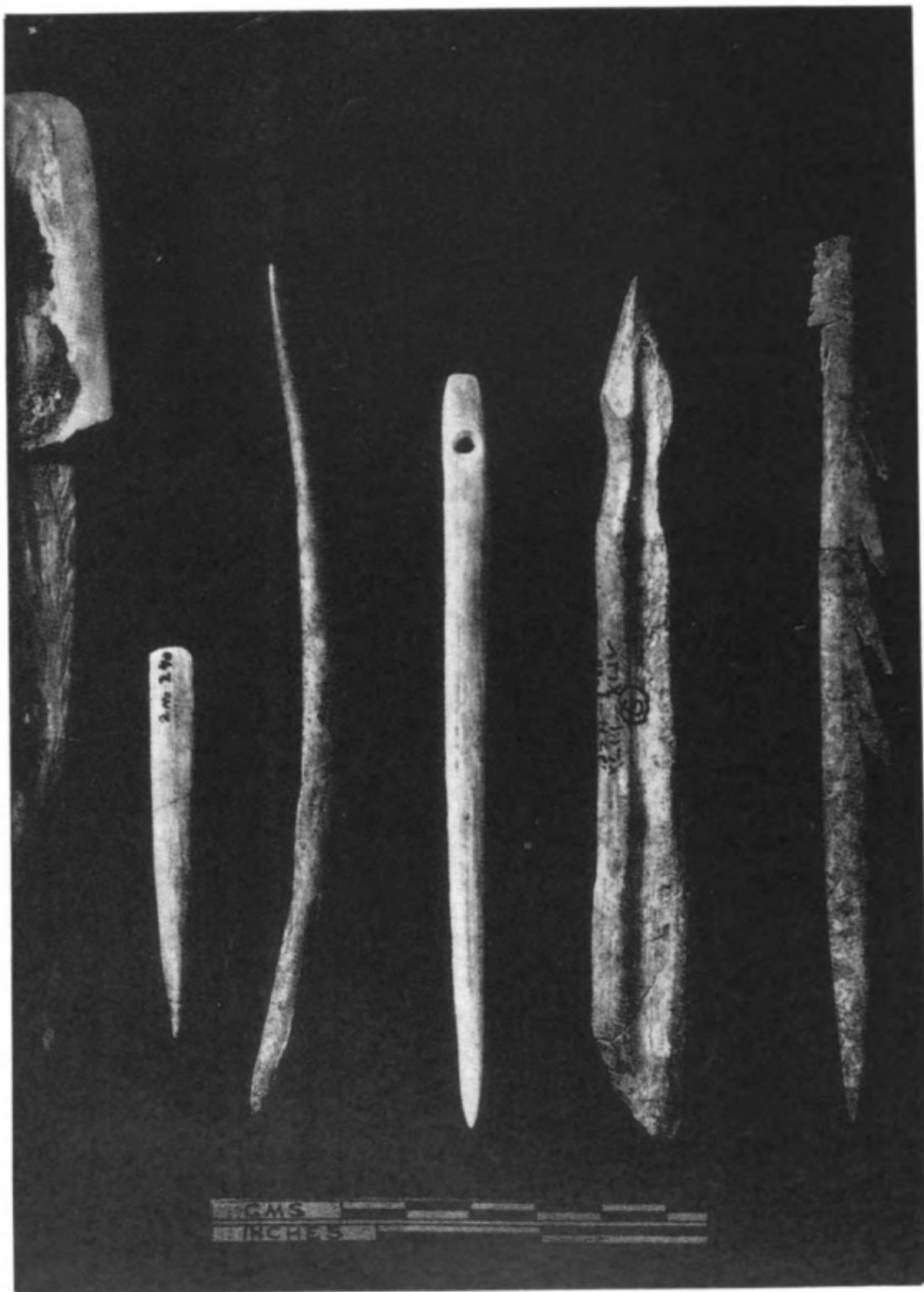
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Neolithic bone tools from Burzahom



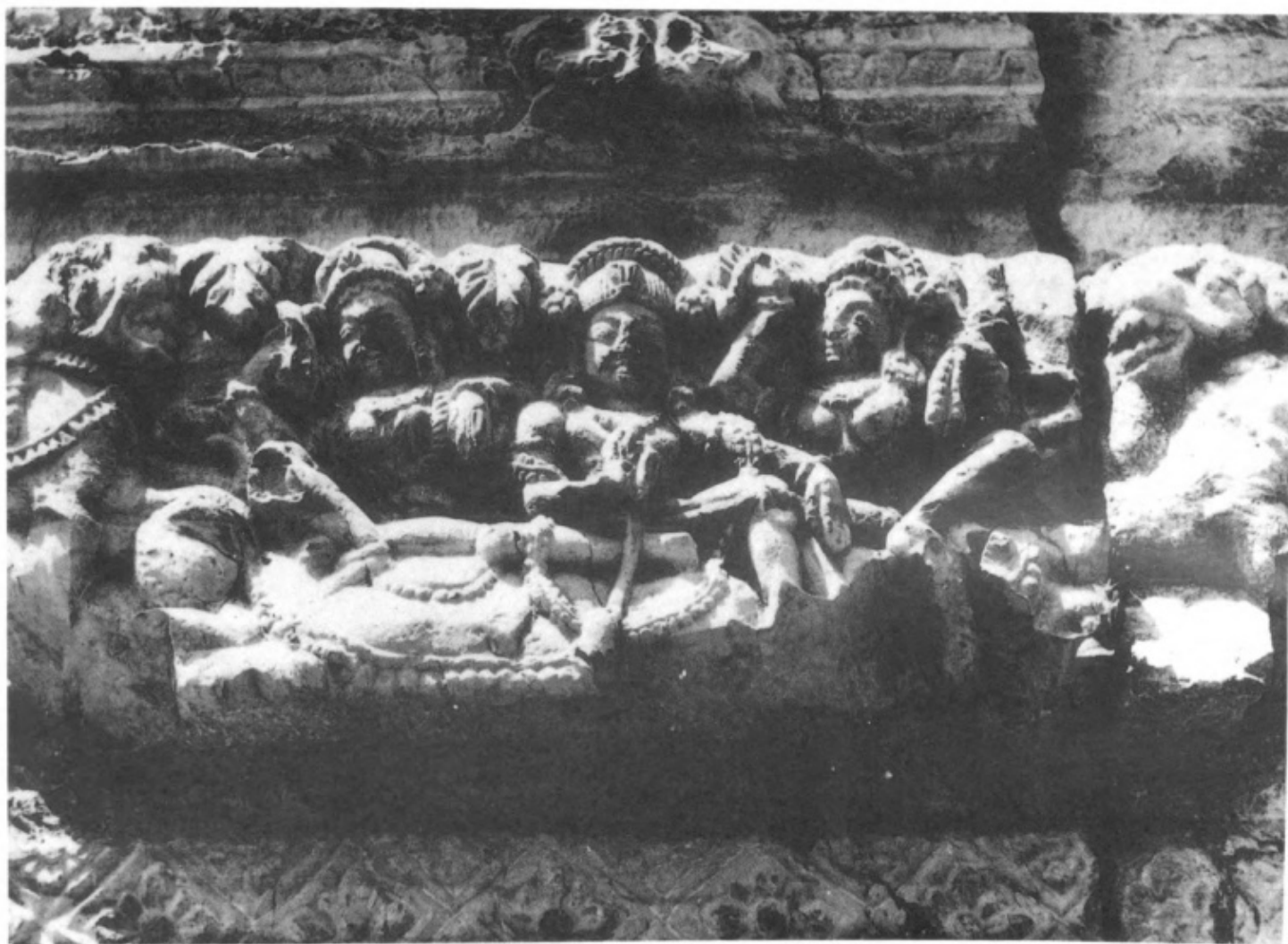
Sun Temple (MARTAND)



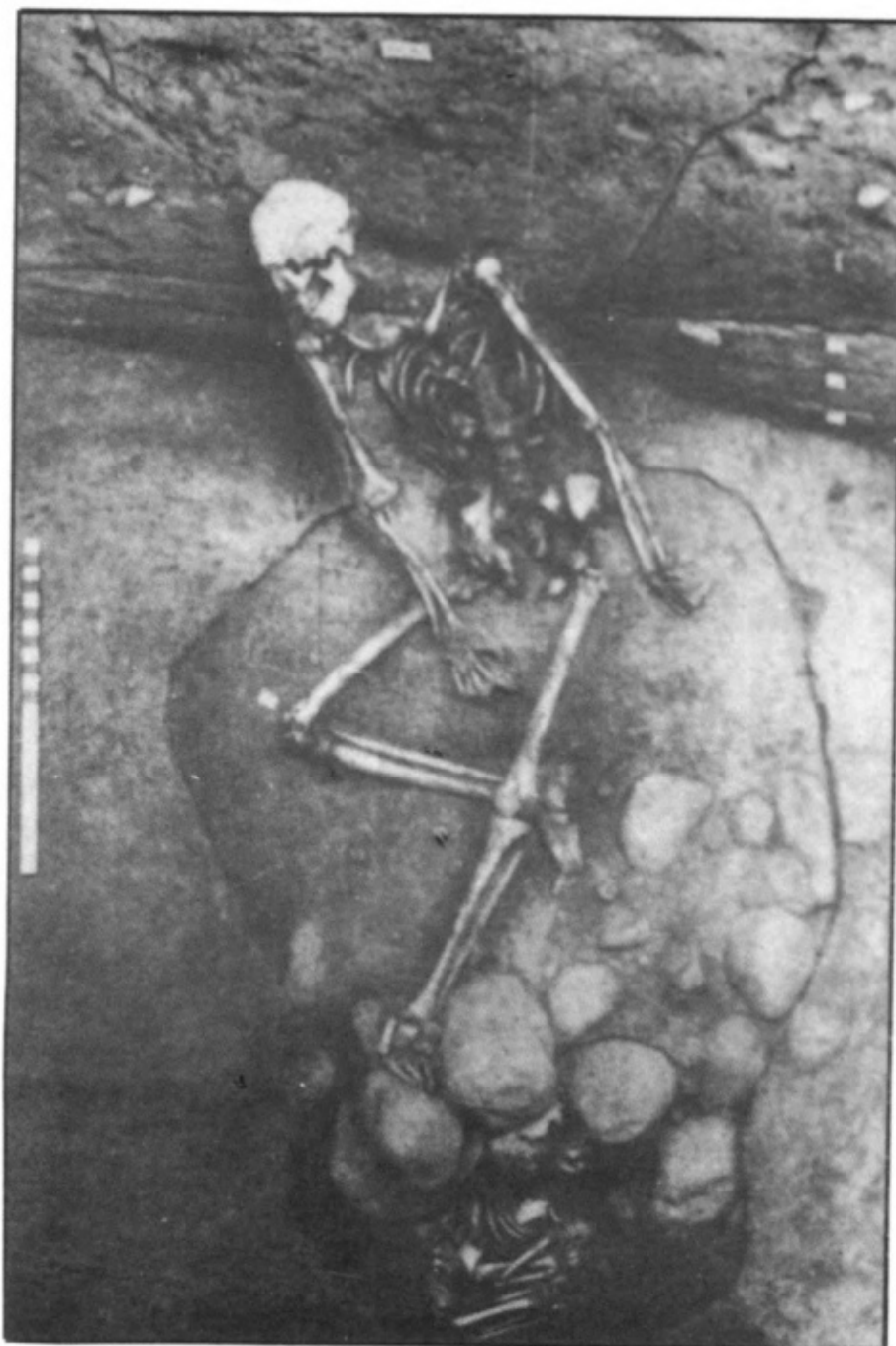
A Sculpture on the Temple Wall of the Sun Temple (MARTAND)



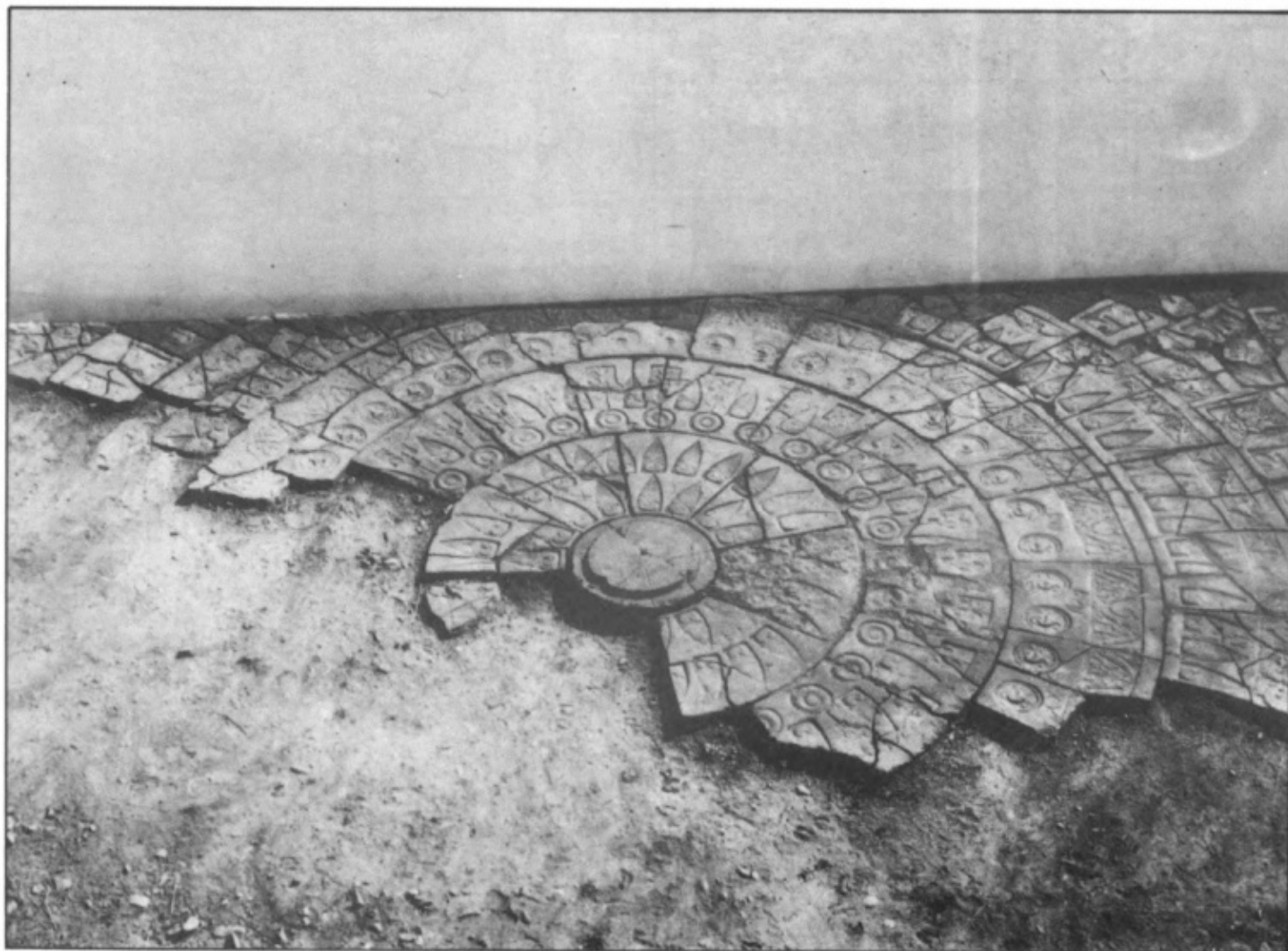
Ruins at Awantipur (Founded by Awantiverman 855-83 A.D.)



A Sculpture at Awantipur



Burzahom Man-lived 4325 years back



Terracotta tiles found in the excavation at Harwan



Terracotta tiles found in the excavation at Harwan



Terracotta tiles found in the excavation at Harwan



Terracotta tiles found in the excavation at Harwan

Chapter II

FROM AN OASIS TO A MIRAGE

FLOURISHING TRADE

Trade in Kashmir flourished during the time of Asoka and Kanishka. As a result it received great inspiration in the field of art and culture from the Indian subcontinent, Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians. Its own kings like Lalitaditya (A.D. 624-661) and Jayapide (A.D. 776-817) by their extensive conquests enriched it with huge wealth and new ideas. Fresh experience and new ideas amidst wealth and prosperity found expression in constructive and creative activity.

RISE OF THE HUNS AND ARABS

With the rise of Huns and the Arab conquest of Sindh, kings of Kashmir got suspicious. In fact Mohammad Ghazni did attempt an invasion of Kashmir in his sixth expedition to India. He attacked twice, once in A.D. 1015 and again in A.D. 1021. He chose the Tosmaidan Pass. The fort of Lohkot defended the pass at its opening. The king of Kashmir collected forces in this fort. Partly due to the strategic location of the fort and partly due to bad weather, he had to give up the siege of the fort and retreat.¹ It was, therefore natural that the kings of Kashmir had developed a tendency to disallow the intrusion of its natural defences. They had closed the entrance points of all the routes. During the time of Alberuni, they did not allow even a Hindu to enter unless they knew him personally, though during earlier times, they would allow one or two foreigners especially Jews.² Ou-Kong also confirms that some of the trade routes were closed.³ There were also global factors responsible for bringing economic recession in the whole of Northern India in the early Middle Ages. These factors included "invasions by fresh waves of barbarian Central Asian tribes; the closure of the silk route through the Tarim Basin and North-West India to the Arabian Sea; and the rise of Islam".⁴

With the self-imposed isolation by its weak kings, Kashmir could not make any progress. Its economic progress had been badly halted. For their economic perpetuation, they had to concentrate on agriculture. There were no opportunities for any kind of economic diversification. Outside markets being unavailable, there could be no foreign contacts. Chances for cultural growth appeared grim.

Land being the only means of living, the demand for land increased substantially. A class of land grabbers (as explained elsewhere) who had already made inroads, lost no time in establishing big landed estates. The population had increased and big landed estates headed by the *Damara* lords, provided work to the poor section of people. Their condition was like those of serfs.

The *Damara* lords lived in castles (*upavesana*) like the barons of England. All the people in the

hierarchy (connected with land) down below came to be called *Damaras* and joined their chief in fighting against the king or in favour of this or that party which they chose to be their ally.⁵

After the 10th century A.D. this class of big land-holders, slowly developed into such a powerful section of Kashmiri society, that state power had to reckon with this force for its survival. The king was at their mercy. They would use any stratagem to achieve their power and influence including arson, loot and actual fighting.⁶ At an opportune time they would come like, "the bees from holes (in the ground) when the snow melts".⁷

A chain of weak kings occupied the seat of power at the fag end of Kashmir's ancient history. They were provided immense opportunities to stabilise and control the chaotic conditions, but they failed. Some of them were indolent, some unintelligent and others petty and timorous. Decades were lost in civil conflicts. Peace and contentment eluded every one.

ZULJU'S INVASION—A CALAMITY

At the beginning of what is called the Medieval Period of Kashmir history, the tiny valley was struck with a sudden calamity. It was a helpless victim of the Tartar invasion led by a vandal Zulju (Dulchu) by name. He swept the beautiful valley like a hurricane. "He came as comes a lion into the cave of the deer".⁸ The coward king Sah-deva, took to heels leaving the helpless people at the mercy of the cruel invader. Zulju devastated the valley. Many peasant cultivators were killed and many more had to take shelter in mountains with the result that large tracts of agricultural land were left uncultivated. "A large number of artists and craftsmen had perished in the course of Zulju's invasion".⁹ The Tartar enemy collected all the food grains by force and whatever was left behind was burnt. It resulted in acute shortage, starvation and death. "When the Dulchu (Zulju) had left the place, those people of Kashmir who had escaped capture, issued out of their strongholds, as mice do out of holes. When the violence caused by Rakhshas Dulchu ceased, the son found not his father, nor the father his son, nor did brother meet his brother. Kashmir became a region before the creation, a vast field with men without food and full of grass."¹⁰

A SETBACK TO CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

More than four hundred years of chaos and conflict caused as a result of power struggles among the kings of Kashmir, the troubles created by the landed nobility challenging even the authority of kings and invasions from outside had left Kashmir emasculated. They had been left politically weak and economically pauperized. Kashmir presented a scenario in which every effort had to be made just for existence. People had become insensitive to any kind of creative activity. Arts and culture received a great setback. No doubt the growth of landed nobility had given some relief to artisans by way of providing some market for their precious arts, jewellery and shawls¹¹ but on the whole the glorious tradition of art and architecture flourishing some centuries back had come to a tragic end.

KING SHIHAB-UD-DIN BREAKS THE ICE

Not before long, there appeared on the political horizon of Kashmir a king, Sultan Shihab-Ud-Din, a great conqueror like Lalitaditya. He dared an expedition up to the borders of Sindh and defeated Jam on the banks of Indu.¹² He conquered Afghanistan and came up to Hindukush. He also subjugated Baltistan and Ladakh. On the bank of Sutlej he fought a battle against the forces of Sultan of Delhi, Feroz Shah Tughlak, which culminated in a treaty between the two sovereign kings. According to this treaty Feroz Shah Tughlak, accepted the sway of this great king of Kashmir over the territories from Kashmir to Sirhind.

The conquests of Shihab-Ud-Din broke the isolation of Kashmir which once again established its

clout as a powerful country. He amassed lot of wealth from his conquests. With the establishment of peace at home, he undertook the programme of construction work. Like his predecessor-builders, he constructed the splendid town of Shihab-Ud-Din Pora at the junction of the Vitasta and Sindhu. The town reflected in the water as if it had hid in the river.¹³ He also laid the foundation of a new town near the city of Srinagri at a higher elevation near the foothills of Hariparbat. It was named after his beloved queen Laxmi. Jonraja calls it the town of Sharika. The king was motivated to construct such a town because of the devastating flood, which liquidated everything in its way, houses, trees and bridges, etc.

Shihab-Ud-Din's programme for construction works, generated the enthusiasm for economic activity and the artisan classes which were associated with construction works appeared busy in building new towns and contributing in modifying, to some extent, the traditional designs.

Sultan Shihab-Ud-Din was a builder because he was culturally rich. He did not behave like a bigot. Once when his Minister, Udayshri suggested to coin the image of Buddha into money, he replied, "Past generations have set up images to obtain fame and earn merit and you propose to demolish them... king Shihab-Ud-Din, it will be said (in future) plundered the image of god, and this fact, dreadful as Yama will make the men in future tremble. When the king had spoken thus, Udayashri held down his head, as if seeking for a hole in the ground wishing to go down into the interior of the earth".¹⁴

However, Shihab-Ud-Din did not last long. He ruled only for nineteen years (A.D. 1354-73). His successor Qutub-Ud-Din ruled for sixteen years. "He was a man of culture, a poet and a patron of learning".¹⁵ He also founded a town and named it after his name and placed upon it a lofty golden umbrella¹⁶. It was a masterpiece of workmanship. Revival of the shawl industry in Kashmir is attributed to him. During his time Sayid Ali Hamdani, in his second visit to Kashmir (A.D. 1378) persuaded the weavers of Kashmir to manufacture this fine fabric.¹⁷

SIKENDER THE ICONOCLAST

The new trend of constructing towns and buildings (mosques, hospices) and encouraging arts and crafts, free of any religious prejudice by king Shihab-Ud-Din after a cultural oblivion of two hundred years, was reversed by Sultan Sikender and his son, Ali Shah. Sultan Sikender destroyed great masterpieces of art in the form of the beautiful idols.¹⁸ He demolished temples specimen of architectural glory of ancient Kashmir. The ruins of these temples, even today, stand as testimony to the great artistic skill and workmanship of the artisans of ancient Kashmir very comparable to any ancient civilization of the world. Jonraja, the historian of those times describes the tragic events thus: "Suhabatta, who disregarded the acts enjoyed by *Vedas*, and was instructed by *mlechhas* instigated the king to break down the images of gods. The good fortune of the subjects left them, and so the king forgot his kingly duties, and took a delight, day and night, in breaking images... kings who broke the images of Martanda, Vishaya, Ishna, Chakrabhrit, Tripureshvara; but what can be said of the evil that came on him by the breaking *Shesha*? When Sureshvari, Varaha, and others were broken, the world trembled, as if through fear, but not so the mind of the wicked king... there was no city, no town, no village, no wood which Suha the Turshka left the temples of gods unbroken".¹⁹

Art knows no barriers; it has no language; no religion and no ethnicity. What forces of evil had drugged this king to destroy one type of artistic beauty to replace it by the other on religious considerations is not known. How apt was the remark made by Mirza Haider Dughlat: "He devoted himself to embellishing Kashmir with buildings, and in order to humour all the nations of the world, he paid attention neither to infidelity nor Islam."²⁰

Sikender was not a well read person and with his religious zeal, he built numerous mosques and

monasteries. These were built in wood and represented the architectural beauty of their own. There, however, was no change over fundamentals from the traditional forms. These structures could hardly be compared to the massive stone temples of the ancient times. Mirza Haider Dughlat calling these temples wonderful pieces of art writes, they "are built of blocks of hewn stone, fitted so accurately one upon the other that there is absolutely no cement used... so carefully placed in position, without plaster or mortar, that a sheet of paper could not be passed between the joints²⁰." There hardly existed highly skilled artisans who created such forms of enormous dimensions. Sir Alexander Cunningham is of the opinion that the extant ruins of the Hindu temples are proof of the artistic excellence and taste of their builders²¹. The carpenters of medieval times also possessed the creative skill, but that was in the production of beautiful forms in wood. We find excellent work of art in wood work in the mosques of Shah-Hamdan, Bahu-Ud-Din Shahib at Srinagar in the form of excellent lattice work (*Tabdan Tarashi*). Mirza Haider Dughlat (A.D. 1543) and Bernier (A.D. 1663) were wonderstruck on seeing them.

ZAIN-UL-ABIDIN, AN OASIS IN A VAST DESERT

After a long period of wilderness and despondency, king Zain-ul-Abidin emerged like an oasis in a vast desert. Benevolence flowed from him. Among other good things, which he did, was to encourage the cottage industries and arts and crafts of Kashmir. It is said about him, that he not only restored the forgotten arts and crafts of Kashmir but also introduced new ones. He was innovative in his methods and made every effort to introduce new skills to improve the qualitative aspects of an art. Any master artisan or craftsman who visited Kashmir those days, was induced to teach his craft to the locals. He patronised artisans from Persia, Sumerkand and Bokhara.²² Every facility was provided to them to settle in Kashmir. "Who did not come from distant-countries like bees to the monarch, who was almost like a *kalpa* tree".²³ The sultan even provided financial assistance to those people who desired to go to foreign countries to learn new arts. Even criminals inside prisons were made to learn new arts and crafts. He made workers and shopkeepers to take oath for maintaining the standard of their trade and desist from cheating and deceit.²⁴

The steps taken by this great Sultan to encourage people in the domain of industry and cottage crafts, made him very popular and they almost worshipped him. "Artists considered him a Vishvakarma descended on earth, Yogis considered him Goraksha and chemists looked on him as Nagarjuna. The king favoured those who showed their skill in arts or in letters and they were thus encouraged to persevere in their callings²⁵."

It is very difficult to be concretely precise about the fact of a particular traditional industry having been started by a particular king. But in the case of Sultan Zain-Ul-Abidin one can speak with confidence that during his time cottage industry and other arts and crafts flourished both qualitatively and quantitatively. During the medieval times, the isolation of Kashmir had come to an end and the trade did not confine only to the mountain walls of the valley.

Zain-Ul-Abidin had been deputed by his father to offer numerous presents to Timur in his young age.²⁶ As a gesture of good will, Timur, offered the prince to stay for many years in Sumerkand. He stayed for about seven years in that great city which was a flourishing centre of many arts and crafts. It was here that Zain-Ul-Abidin was attracted and influenced by a number of arts and crafts. Besides, when Zain-Ul-Abidin was still growing as the future king of Kashmir, he was put under a learned Kashmiri tutor, Maulana Kabir, who had been himself, educated in Herat, an Iranian city of great art and culture.²⁷ He too influenced the prince and it was not, therefore, surprising that he made Persian an official language of the court, when he became the king. He also sent his ambassadors to countries of

Muslim culture far and near (including Turkey, Mecca and Egypt). He then invited wood-carvers, paper makers, papier-mache experts, shawl weavers, embroiderers and textile workers from these countries.²⁸ Other master-craftsmen invited were enamellers, experts in the art of gilding silver and the specialists at damascening iron, that is producing a pattern on a blade of a sword or on the barrel of a gun²⁹. Enamellers worked in silver, copper or brass.

He took all the remedial measures, which could make Kashmir a prosperous country especially due to its arts and crafts. At the end of his rule and even many years after his death, Kashmir abounded in numerous variety of arts and crafts. When Mirza Haider Dughlat came to Kashmir, he wrote, "In Kashmir one meets with all those arts and crafts, uncommon, such as stone cutting, stone polishing, bottle making, window cutting (*tabdan tarashi*), gold beating, etc. In the whole of Mavara-Un-Nahr, except in Sumerkand and Bokhara, these are even abundant. This is all due to Sultan Zain-Ul-Abidin."³⁰

PAPER MAKING

It is said that the paper making industry was introduced by Zain-Ul-Abidin. But actually the process had already been started by the Muslim refugees from Persia and Sumerkand between fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³¹ Credit goes to this great Sultan for arranging its production in a well organised fashion. He sent two persons to Sumerkand for receiving training in paper manufacture and book-binding. Paper had come to Sumerkand 1300 years ago.³² After their return from Sumerkand, these persons taught these arts to others; paper manufacturing having been started in Phag Fargana³³ (the belt around Vichar Nag, Srinagar). To both of these persons, the Sultan, assigned a village each as Jagirs. They continued to hold these Jagirs up to the 17th century when the Kashmiri historian, Hyder Malik still lived.³⁴

PAPIER-MACHE

Akin to the paper industry is the papier-mache industry. The whole art is derived from mashed paper. Sultan Zain-Ul-Abidin invited experts from Sumerkand to teach their artisan folk... "how to make pottery of light weight with paper, and those of his subjects who were able to lift the shapes and colours from the flowers and the birds and other beauties they had gazed upon, he had instructed in the art of decorating this paper pottery³⁵." In this kind of craft, actually, the paper pulp is so moulded as to produce beautiful shapes which are utilitarian and aesthetically rich. Over the moulds Sheets of paper are pasted and elegant floral or other designs painted by the *naqash* (the designer) in gold, silver, lacquer and bright dyes. These articles of use then look like masterpieces of art. Articles like bangle-boxes, pen-boxes, soap-boxes, powder-bowls, picture frames, books stands and lamp-shades of various designs are produced. The craft is also known *kari-kalamdani* (pen-work) or *kari-munaqashi* (painted work). Persian and Central Asian immigrants have contributed in the development of this art in Kashmir.³⁶

CARPETS

There is no direct or indirect evidence to show that carpets were made in Kashmir before Sultan Zain-Ul-Abidin. The king was, in fact, inspired a lot by observing beautiful carpets of most attractive designs on his visit to Sumerkand. When he became the ruler of Kashmir, he requisitioned some carpet weavers from Sumerkand and ordered the manufacture in the valley. The industry made good progress during his time. But after his death the industry languished for a long time. It was the Mughal king, Jehangir, who brought it to life again. During the Governorship of Ahmad Beg Khan (A.D. 1614-18), one person, Akhun Rahnuma, went for a Haj pilgrimage via Central Asia and visited Andijan (capital of

Fergana) on his return. He brought carpet weaving tools with him. After having learnt the art at Andijan he taught it to the weavers in Kashmir.³⁷ Thus the art was once again restored in Kashmir.

KASHMIR SHAWL

There is a popular belief in Kashmir that the shawl industry was introduced in Kashmir by *Badshah*—the king Zan-Ul-Abidin. But it is not so. Apart from being an ancient industry in Kashmir it was firmly established before the thirteenth century³⁸ and that "Mohamad Tugluk sent Kashmir shawls as present to Chinese emperor³⁹." In 1378, when Mir Sayid Ali Hamdani visited Kashmir a second time he took interest in this art⁴⁰ and the then Sultan of Kashmir Qutub-ul-Din encouraged the production of shawls.

To one man and the only one, king Zan-Ul-Abidin, goes the credit of reviving this traditional industry in a big way. Writing about the shawl under this Sultan, Shrivara, the court chronicler, says, "The woollen fabrics called the *soha* (shawl) and others manufactured in foreign countries and those made in Kashmir today, are both beautiful, but the latter are strong and fit for a king".⁴¹ Shawls were not only produced for local consumption but also for export. These were an important item of Kashmir's external trade to the Indian subcontinent.

SILK

"China is credited with the first silk culture, though some have claimed it began in India⁴²." It is said that a century before the Biblical Deluge and during the time of Fou-he, silk raising began in China.⁴³ Use of mulberry leaves for feeding silkworms was known in 2200 B.C.⁴⁴ The first successful rearing of silkworms took place in 2700 B.C. during the time of Si-ling-Chi, Empress of China.⁴⁵ Confucius recorded in 2640 B.C. that silk was first reeled from cocoon.⁴⁶ Famous silk routes were used for silk textiles by traders during the third century B.C.⁴⁷

The silk industry in Kashmir is equally an ancient one. There are references about silk in *Nilamat Purana*. One reference advises that a priest be given a new silken cloth at the time of the performance of *Shradda* ceremony.⁴⁸ The term *Ciram Suka* is used for Chinese silk.⁴⁹ In ancient times Kashmir silk was exported to Damascus and Bokhara. The people of modern Khotan were the principal agents to carry it to Western Asia and Europe.⁵⁰

Sultan Zain-Ul-Abidin reorganized the industry. He helped in evolving better designs and techniques. Weaver's brush and loom were introduced due to which production of silk cloth was made possible.⁵¹ Writes Shrivara, "It was then that the people of Kashmir learnt the use of weaver's brush and loom and to-day, they are weaving the valuable cloth of silk⁵²." The silk they produced was glittering and had a good collection of threads.⁵³ There is evidence to show that during this time silkworms were reared; for their food the mulberry trees were cultivated.⁵⁴ Mirza Haider Dughlat in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, records, "Among the wonders of Kashmir was the abundance of mulberry trees, cultivated for their leaves from which silk was obtained".⁵⁵ According to the version given by Shrivara about the flourishing condition of this industry and the superior quality of silk it produced, it could have been one of the important items on the export list of Kashmir's foreign trade. Moreland on the other hand is of the view that the production of silk in Kashmir was worked up locally and could not appear to be extensive.⁵⁶ But as we see, in the years following Zain-Ul-Abidin, silken clothes were very often given in the form of presents on various festivals "All the servants of the new king wore clothes of bright silk which looked graceful like waves and displayed changeful prosperity⁵⁷."

OTHER ARTS

Many other types of arts and crafts flourished during Zain-Ul-Abidin's time. These have been alluded to by Mirza Haider Dughlat in his book on Kashmir. Though no details of their origin have been given but we see these arts extant even at present. These are stone polishing, stone-cutting, gold beating, etc.

Passing away of this great king (A.D. 1470) was followed by a long period of internecine power struggle among his sons and grandsons and other aspirants to the throne. Chak and Sayid nobles fought bloody wars for their landed interests and to capture seats of power. The fight with Sayid nobles assumed the character of a patriotic war and the cultivators more than willingly came with heaps of paddy to help their compatriots, because the Sayid nobles controlled the treasury.⁵⁸ The artisans of the land could not just stand and watch as passive spectators.

MIRZA HAIDER DUGHLAT REVITALISES ARTS AND CRAFTS

The arts and crafts which had flourished under Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin once again received a setback. Ironically, history had left it to the lot of a foreign invader, Mirza Haider Dughlat to revitalise these arts and save these from total annihilation. Haider was himself a versatile genius and appreciated the work done by the great Sultan. He himself excelled in penmanship, painting and various kinds of handiwork.⁵⁹ He wrote several books. To restore the past glory of the arts and crafts, he too, invited craftsmen from different countries. The *Baburnama* records, "the cottage industries and other arts and crafts which had been languishing due to civil wars, were again brought to life⁶⁰."

Haider not only revitalised the dying industries but also introduced new crafts. One such craft was *khutambandi* ceiling. In this type of ceiling small and well finished slices of pine wood are so interlocked as to produce fine geometrical shapes and patterns. The pieces are also made of different shades and sizes which commensurate with a particular design. It is the creative imagination and the skill of the artist that can produce the best possible designs. Such ceilings became so popular in Kashmir that even the Britishers introduced these ceilings in England.⁶¹ Even to-day one can see these ceilings in Persia, Constantinople, Algiers, Morocco, Sumerkand and Bukhara.

Production of shawls, though revived by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin after its state of oblivion for centuries, was also on the decline. Mirza Haider invigorated the industry by introducing coloured threads and cone patterns for the first time. It so happened when one Nagz Beg from Khokand came to Kashmir in the capacity of a cook with Mirza himself. Nagz Beg presented to his master a piece of *pashmina*, 1.5 yards square. After seeing the shawl, his master was extremely pleased. "He inquired as to what it was. The reply was: "*shawl*", because the people of Khokand call a blanket, a shawl. "Is it *ek* (single) or *du* (double) *shawl*", was the next query. Nagz Beg replied that it was *du shawl*.⁶² Nagz Beg, then, produced more shawls and introduced coloured patterns. The shawl trade hereafter, picked up and the industry got a new life.

The change towards coloured patterns is attributed to an interesting incident. Once, while weaving a shawl, a worker received a clout from Nagz Beg for some mistake made by him and his nose started to bleed. The drops of blood from his formed some red spots on the square piece of *pashmina* already woven. Nagz Beg was struck with an idea of a coloured design in shawls. He got some *pashmina* threads dyed red and green. Thus was produced a shawl with coloured patterns.⁶³

Perhaps, it is because of this astounding revival of the shawl industry in Kashmir that a shawl (having become the light veil) fastened by a thin golden thread over the forehead of *Mona Lisa*, in the famous painting of Leonardo Da Vinci (A.D. 1519). It is been believed by experts to be one of those earlier fabrics of Kashmir which could be drawn through a ring due to its softness.⁶⁴

Prior to the coming of Mughals, Kashmir presented a picture of complete chaos and anarchy. The situation was comparable to the conditions prevailing in other parts of India when Mughals took over from the Afghans. The country was divided into many weak independent states dominated by the obnoxious Jagirdari system. In Kashmir various factions of nobles and Jagirdars fought bloody battles to capture power under the later sultans who were weak. The powerful nobles had exasperated the

people by plunging them into continual strife and turmoil for their vested interest. They even masqueraded their struggle for power by dividing people on communal lines. They engineered Shia-Sunni strife to grab power and thus achieve their socio-economic ends. Mostly they aimed at capturing the post of a Wazir (Prime Minister) and in this endeavour they even invited foreign invaders to capture the throne of Kashmir. This is why when Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi along with other representatives called at the court of Akbar, they pleaded that the mischievous nobles of Kashmir should not be associated with the administration of Kashmir.⁶⁵ So with the coming of Akbar, the landed nobility in Kashmir was crushed. It was in tune with Akbar's administration in other parts of the country which was uniformly ruled by a well organised administrative system.

MUGHALS BRING GRANDEUR AND CULTURE

The Mughals brought with them grandeur and a new culture. The word "Mughal" connotes the ultimate in luxury and display and this hyperbolic assumption is probably not wide off the mark. They made Kashmir a seat of enjoyment and enriched it with fine aesthetics which was the early tradition of Kashmir. Art and architecture flourished. Artisans of Kashmir were already talented. It was noticed by the Mughals. Their policy throughout the empire was to encourage arts and crafts. As a sequel, the gifted artisans of Kashmir received a tremendous boost. Abul Fazl is on record to have said that Kashmiri craftsmen were skilled enough to be "deservedly employed in the great cities". They did employ them. "Manuscripts produced in the Mughal court workshops after the end of the sixteenth century often contain the names of the artists with the appendage, 'Kashmiri', to show that they came from Kashmir. In the records of craftsmen employed on the Taj Mahal, the name of Ram Lal Kashmiri, appears, suggesting⁶⁶ that at least one artist from Kashmir had a hand in creating such a specimen of architectural glory. "The celebrated Kashmir ware—bedsteads, trunks, boxes, inkstands, etc. were in great demand in every part of India."⁶⁷

AKBAR RECHRISTIAN SHAWL AS PARAM NARAM

The delicate shawl was given the name of *Param Naram* by Akbar. In *Ain-i-Akbari* Abul Fazl wrote: "His majesty encourages in every possible way the manufacture of shawls in Kashmir⁶⁸." This great emperor introduced the custom of wearing two shawls one under the other. It gave a beautiful look. Henceforth, it became a craze with Mughal nobility to wear double shawls. The fashion increased the demand for Kashmiri shawls. It led to the doubling of production; for one unit of shawl two lengths of *pashmina* were required. The flourishing condition of shawl manufacture during Mughal times is confirmed even by Bernier (A.D. 1666-68). He writes, "What may be considered peculiar to Kashmir, and the stable commodity, that which particularly promotes the trade of the country and fills it with wealth is the prodigious quantity of shawls which they manufacture, and which gives occupation even to the little children."⁶⁹

Mughal emperors wore on their turbans an almond shaped jewelled ornament called Jigha. On the top of the Jigha was an aigrette of feathers. A weaver from Andijan imitated the design in a scarf made for Emperor Babur, and was so successful, that it became a fashion cherished by one and all. Its popularity spread beyond our country and was adopted in art centres in Persia. Many Andijani weavers were brought to India and Kashmir to produce such designs. The design was also adopted by Persian carpet makers.

The Court historian of Akbar, Abul Fazl, further informs us that the emperor invited the master craftsmen from Kashmir to his court for producing shawls. He employed them in imperial workshops. Keen interest was taken in getting the quality and texture of the fabric improved. The improvement in its quality increased the demand and it fetched a good price. Introduction of an improvement in the



Utilitarian items in Papier Mache

Beautiful Patterns of Khutambandi



Beet Dar



Doo Murabe



Carpet - Kashmir Kashan Wool



Dowazdha Gird



Teen Bakhsh

texture of the shawl fabric and the royal patronage to the craft combined together to make shawl-weaving a prosperous industry.

We have the evidence in 17th century miniature paintings having a detailed portrait of a prince wearing a Kashmir shawl.⁷⁰ It proves conclusively that Kashmir shawls had become very popular during Mughal times. There were about two thousand shawl factories during the time of Akbar.⁷¹ The number of looms was about forty thousand.⁷² The price of a shawl ranged between Rs 2 to Rs. 1,200.⁷³ By Jahangir's time shawls had become so much popular that Jahangir did not think it necessary to praise it. He wrote "the shawls of Kashmir to which my father gave the name of *param naram*, are very famous: there is no need to praise them".⁷⁴

During Shah Jahan's time a monk, Sebastain Manrique, travelled to India and visited the emperors court. He was highly impressed by Kashmir shawls. He described these as choice clothes.⁷⁵ Mughal Emperor Mohammad Shah was so much excited to receive a Kashmir shawl with floral designs that he ordered forty thousand rupees' worth shawls for him to be supplied every year.⁷⁶ The design is still named after him - *Mohammadshahi*. This shows that the shawl trade of Kashmir was in healthy condition at the end of the Mughal period. Even Nadir Shah's ambassador in Constantinople in 1793, took among the fifteen elephant loads of precious presents, a number of Kashmiri shawls, which the Sultan gifted to the wives of ambassadors of his court.⁷⁷

CARPET WEAVING GIVEN A FRESH START

The carpet industry made its beginning during the time of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. He requisitioned some weavers from Sumerkand to do the job. But after his death it could not survive. It was given a fresh start during the Mughal period. One blind Kashmiri, Akhun Rahnuma, during the time of Jahangir, reintroduced the industry after learning the art in Sumerkand (detail elsewhere in this work). Akhun Rahnuma's tomb in Gojwara, Srinagar, is still held in great esteem by carpet weavers. The very fact that there are old carpets dating A.D. 1653 in Ashar Mahal at Bijapur originating from Kashmir,⁷⁸ is evidence enough to show that the carpet industry had been encouraged by Mughals after Jahangir.

Manufacture of Kashmiri carpets follow the Persian types. But these have been so modified to the local environment and instilled with local motifs that they assume totally a Kashmiri character. Central Asian influence is evident from the choice of flora and fauna and the geometrical forms they have adopted in their designs. The Persian influence is characterised by the "motifs of paradise-gardens, strewn with bright hued flowers and blossoming trees, the repetition of romantic and legendary subjects".⁷⁹

PAPIER-MACHE THRIVES

In A.D. 1823, William Moorcroft was informed by sources in Kashmir that the papier-mache craft had thrived during the Mughal times. It had employed large number of craftsmen who, very often, sent their samples of paintings and designs to Delhi for examination by the Emperor. "The industry reached its apogee during the Mughal rule, when the products of papier-mache artists, like pen-cases, jewellery-boxes, book-ends, etc. were in great demand in Delhi and other capitals⁸⁰." The interest of Mughals is evident from the attractive designs of papier-mache painted and gilded inside the black marble summer house in the Shalimar garden at Srinagar, Kashmir. A description of a Mughal house by Bernier, shows the "ceiling gilded and painted"..... and "rooms with richly carpeted floors strewn with embroidered cushions and mattresses for the master of the house and his guest to relax on,"⁸¹ conclusively proves that not only the craft of papier-mache but also other crafts were in a state of good health and were marketed widely outside Kashmir. These articles were very popular among the rich.

PAPER MAKING

George Forster who visited Kashmir thirty years after the Mughal rule mentions that paper manufactured in Kashmir was an article of extensive trade and commerce. It still maintained the old reputation of being superior to anything produced in Hindustan. He also informs that the paper fabricated in Kashmir during the time he visited Kashmir was the "best writing paper in the East⁸²." It was of silky texture and glossy appearance. The Mughals gave special attention to this industry. It was in great demand.

Some of the polished specimen of this paper were called *farmashi*, *dhamashi*, *kalamdani* and *rangmaz*. One of the unique qualities of this paper was that it could be washed and then again used for writing. So wrote Sheik Yaqub Sarfi to his friend, Abdul Qadir Badauni, "If you should have any need of Kashmir paper for rough notes and drafts, I hope, that you will inform me of the fact, so that I may send you from Kashmir the rough copy of my commentaries, the writing on which can be washed from the paper completely that no trace of the ink will remain as you have yourself seen⁸³." The extract from Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi not only point to the unique quality of the paper but also to the fact that scholars and men of letters used this paper for their commentaries "The Kashmir copyists did not use it for copying precious documents. They used their own ancient and indigenous paper, the *bhoj patra*⁸⁴."

Kashmir produced even silk under the Mughals.⁸⁵ There is evidence to show that the ladies of the Mughal courts delighted in wearing the materials, while the men-folk flung silken shawls and cloaks over their official uniforms even on most important ceremonial occasions.⁸⁶

AFGANS MAKE KASHMIR A COLONY

As on earlier occasions, the nobles of Kashmir were once again responsible for bringing disaster to Kashmir. They were instrumental in getting Afghan rule to Kashmir; chief of them being Mir Muquim Kanth and Khwaja Zahir Dedmari.

The Mughals had made Kashmir a *Suba* of their vast empire and ruled it as one of its parts. They had a well-established central administration. Their revenue administration was *kacha*⁸⁷ and not *pakka*⁸⁸ and they gave relative peace and stability to Kashmir. On the other hand, Afgans made Kashmir a colony; their only interest was to extort as much revenue as possible. This was done through their rapacious governors. It was with this policy perspective in view that they ravaged Kashmir both for their masters at Kabul and for their personal aggrandisement without being answerable to the king in a distant land (at Kabul). Impelled by their personal greed and ambition, many among them mustered courage to declare independence. In a short span of 67 years of Afghan rule, about seven governors declared themselves independent. Kashmir experienced difficult times. It was a period of confrontation and war leading to chaotic conditions. People were subjected to forced exactions and extortions. One of the governors Abdullah Ishq Aqasi, behaved like a brigand. He called the rich people of the city of Srinagar to his palace and asked them to surrender all their wealth. Many had to face death. One Jalil, was branded with red hot iron bars and the son of another (Qazi Khan) was tortured to such an extent that he jumped into river Jehlum committing suicide.⁸⁹ Another governor Karim Dad Khan (A.D. 1778 to A.D. 1783) collected well-to-do Kashmiri Pandits and suffocated them to death by huddling them up in a small room full of the smoke of cow-dung. He extorted from them Rs. 50,000. He made it an annual tax, *Zari-Dudah*⁹⁰ (a tax on Hindus).

The atmosphere in Kashmir was totally vitiated. It was not conducive to trade and commerce. No attention could be given to the encouragement of arts and crafts.

KASHMIRI CRAFTSMEN CREATIVE EVEN IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS

The traditional arts and crafts followed their own momentum. They continued to persist. To remain

attached to a particular craft had become a habit, a way of life, with multitudes of craftsmen and artisans. Although the cultivators of the land had already started deserting the land for obvious reasons, yet the artisan had the tenacity to stick to the art of his forefathers. They continued to earn an existence from their respective crafts. The creative genius is so deeprooted in the temper of Kashmiri craftsman, that he cannot help but give expression to his strong urge even in adverse circumstances.

We thus find during the time of one Afgan governor, Azad Khan, a master craftsman, Ala Baba getting inspired by the marks of the dirty claws of a fowl on a piece of white cloth, devising a coloured design of embroidery for a shawl.⁹¹ Similarly, it was by sheer accident that the shawl came to be introduced in Europe. It so happened that in A.D. 1796, a blind man Sayid Yashaya came to Kashmir from Baghdad. When he left Kashmir, the Governor gave him an orange coloured shawl as a parting gift. He carried this shawl to Egypt and presented it to Khadive. Khadive, in turn presented it to Napoleon and the emperor gifted it to his beloved, Josephine. In a full length portrait painting dated A.D. 1809, Josephine is shown wearing a dress made out of a long white Kashmiri shawl.⁹² She owned two hundred such shawls.⁹³ In the evening when she sat with Napoleon in front of the drawing room fire she wrapped herself with a precious Kashmiri shawl. The emperor would not like the shawl to come between his eyes and her broad bare bosom. He would snatch and throw it into the fire. Then Josephine clapped her hands and her maid would present yet another shawl. Again it would be thrown into the fire and the game would thus continue. Her fancy for Kashmiri shawls led to a craze among the French and European ladies to possess the much coveted shawl at any cost.

DAGSHAWL INTRODUCED

It is the flair of Kashmiri artisans for creative activity which made arts and crafts, especially shawls, popular during the Afgan rule in Kashmir, otherwise the Afgans were more interested in taxing art products very heavily. They introduced the institution of *Dagshawl*. Through this institution, the most notorious practice of selling saffron and grain, which the government procured as a part of state share, on higher than market prices to the city population, was introduced. A major chunk (about twelve thousand) of the poor population of the city of Srinagar were shawl weavers. This practice called *niliv* or *tarah*, had broken the spine of the shawl weavers. After burning midnight oil, they could earn and save hardly enough to keep their body and soul together. However this practice was later abolished. But instead, a tax, *Qasur-i-Shali* was introduced.⁹⁴ This tax was heavy. Finally, a new tax of 1.5 pie per rupee *ad valorem* on every shawl manufactured was levied. It was again raised to 3 pie per rupee under Sher Mohammad Khan.⁹⁵

HEAVY TAXATION POLICY

Due to the callous attitude of the Afgan rulers and their heavy taxation policy, the industry had received a setback. The number of looms, which stood at 40,000 in Mughal times, had fallen to 16,000.⁹⁶ The figure, however, again rose to 24,000 in A.D. 1813⁹⁷ when the shawl became a fashion in France and other European countries.

SHAWL BECOMES A RAGE IN EUROPE

Other arts and crafts also remained depressed precisely because of lack of Government encouragement. The Afgans, no doubt, harmed the art industry by their heavy taxation policy, but they could not suppress the unflinching loyalty of craftsmen with which they stuck to their traditional craft. It was not therefore that markets were not full of these arts and crafts even in this period. It could have been a far better proposition had they been patronised by the Afgan government especially when shawls had become a fashion in Europe. Kashmir continued to be a place for traders from various

countries. "In Kashmir are seen merchants and commercial agents of most of the principal cities of Northern India, also of Tartary, Persia and Turkey who, at the same time advanced their fortunes and enjoyed the pleasure of a fine climate⁹⁸." Even a Russian traveller, Philipp Efremov, who visited Kashmir in 1786 described Kashmiris as "adroit artisans who also like to engage in trade".⁹⁹

The changeover from the Hindu kings to Muslims in Kashmir did not follow the same track as the Arab conquest of Sindh. No invasion of Kashmir by Muslims took place, though Mohammad Ghazni attempted it twice (A.D. 1015 and 1021). He had to return disappointed from the fort of Lohkot at the opening of the Tosamaidan route to Kashmir.¹⁰⁰ The transfer of power took place by an internal process. In the power struggle, even the non-Muslim nobility took part. The first man who snatched power from the Hindu ruler was a Buddhist, who even after offering to convert to Hinduism was not allowed to do so by the Brahmins. In fact changeover from the Hindu rule to Muslim was imperceptible. The administration continued to be in the hands of Brahmins for whom change of religion presented no advantage for about two centuries. Hindu tradition and way of life persisted for a long time.

MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE EVOLVED OUT OF KASHMIR'S OWN BUILDING TRADITION

The concept of muslim architecture during medieval times was evolved out of Kashmir's own building tradition and experience. It was not directly thrust by any conqueror belonging to a particular community. "The absence from Kashmir of the regular saracenic mosques with cloisters and domes, is not therefore, surprising".¹⁰¹ To begin with, they started building mosques from the materials of disused temples. We have a number of such mosques even today, bearing evidence to this fact.

Wooden architecture during the medieval times is generally associated with Muslim architecture. But the ancient period of history of Kashmir presents innumerable examples showing that the tradition of wooden architecture already existed there. For instance, the city of Kalhana's own time, still boasted of "mansions which reached the clouds," built mostly of wood, just as the mass of private houses in modern Srinagar.¹⁰² Praversena II built the Great Bridge (*Brhat Setu*) in his new capital.¹⁰³ It was a bridge made by joining boats. King Ananta (A.D. 1028-63) built a new palace, very high near the second bridge at Srinagar and was mostly made of wood.¹⁰⁴ This type of palace has been compared by M.A. Stein to the one built by king Zain-ul-Abidin as described by Mirza Haider Dughlat.¹⁰⁵

During the medieval times, the master carpenters, made their contribution by interpolating new forms and designs over the traditional constructions with which they were already familiar. Such structural forms and decorative motifs as peculiarly associated with Muslim architecture were grafted over traditional forms.¹⁰⁶ Dr. Goetz is of the view that the mosques and *ziarats* in Kashmir, "seem to be an adaptation of the preceding wooden architecture of the last medieval period: cubic block houses with a low pyramidal grass roof and a *mazina* on top, the spine of which is obviously an adaptation of the Buddhist *chhtravali* and Hindu *sikhra*¹⁰⁷."

TABDAN TARASHI AND KHUTUMBAND

The craftsmen of this period have followed meticulously the craft of lattice work (*tabdan tarashi*) not very much known in ancient times. Similarly the *khutumband* ceilings, introduced by Mirza Haider Dughlat after Central Asian fashion has been widely made use of by Kashmir carpenters. This type of fancy ceiling continues to be constructed even today.

The technique of erecting huge wooden structures on cantilever principle is the contribution of the craftsmen of this period. The craftsmen were inspired and encouraged by contemporary sultans who had a strong urge for building new towns, bridges, and other forms of architecture. Mirza Haider was

astonished to see the town of Srinagar for the first time. "In the town there are many lofty buildings constructed of fresh cutpine. Most of these are at least five storeys high and each storey contains apartments, halls, galleries and towns. The beauty of their exterior defies description, and who beholds them for the first time bite the finger of astonishment with the teeth of admiration. But the interiors are not equal to the exterior".¹⁰⁸

CANTILEVER CONSTRUCTION INTRODUCED

A number of towns, palaces and other constructions have been mentioned by Zain-ul-Abidin's court historian which is worth appreciation. Says he (Shrivara), "The king (Zain-ul-Abidin) had constructed a bridge on *Vitasta* (Jehlum) named *Zainkadli*, with four towers made of stone and wood"¹⁰⁹... This was the first permanent bridge on river *Vitasta*¹¹⁰. It showed the same peculiar cantilever construction which is observed in the bridges even at present¹¹¹. He built the town of Zainagiri, rich with Maths, provided market places extending from the Pradyumana Hill to Amre-Shapura".¹¹²

TOWNS, BUILDINGS AND MOSQUES CONSTRUCTED

At Suyyapura, he built a town, Snanagri and adorned it with houses.¹¹³ A royal city, named Sidhipuri was very elegantly built by him.¹¹⁴

The palace which Zain-ul-Abidin constructed for himself in the capital had twelve storeys, comprising fifty rooms. The whole of this lofty structure was made of wood.¹¹⁵ Among other wooden structures there were a number of mosques which were built during medieval times and which still stand in Kashmir. To name a few, the *ziarat* at Aishmuqam and the mosque at *Tsar-i-Sharief* deserve mention. The former is known for its excellent lattice work and the latter for the arrangement of logs on the cantilever principle.¹¹⁶

In many of the medieval architectural creations, the master craftsmen of that period have built the walls with bricks and mortar. Either the logs have been laid across each other or the space between them filled with brick-work. A sloping gable, projected from the side, is a unique feature. "The angles of the eaves are generally ornamented with wooden pendants suspended from the corners, carved like small bells and shaped like cactus leaves"¹¹⁷.

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Chapter III

THE RISE AND COLLAPSE IN THE 19th CENTURY

BACKGROUND

Kashmir became a landlocked territory after the Mughals were thrown out by the Afgans (A.D. 1753). Mughals had made it a part of their vast empire and the routes leading to the Indian subcontinent were directly open to it. This had enriched Kashmir with advanced Mughal culture and a highly developed trade and industry. The coming of Afgans, shifted the kaleidoscope from one colour to another.

All the direct routes to the Indian subcontinent were closed. Trade and commerce became a monopoly of Gilzai Pathans and Durani Afgans¹, who directed it mostly to Kabul, Kandhar, Persia, Central Asia and through a long circuitous route to India. Kashmiri traders, who had established international reputation in the shawl trade, were totally ignored. Besides, due to its landlocked conditions, people of Kashmir could not get immediate relief during the times of famines, caused by natural calamities; crop failures, floods, heavy snowfalls and earthquakes. Due to its long distance from Kabul, Afgans could not administer Kashmir efficiently. In a short span of 67 years of their rule, about seven governors declared themselves independent. They had turned recalcitrant. The atmosphere of chaos and confrontation was not at all conducive to the growth of trade and industry.

ISOLATION BROKEN

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's sway over Kashmir (A.D. 1819) brought it closer to the Indian sub-continent. It completely broke the isolation of this tiny State. "The linking of the Kashmir valley with the warm Punjab, and through the Punjab with Delhi and beyond diversified the demands and opportunities of industry, trades, commerce and travel".² Trade no more remained the monopoly of Afgan trading classes. Kashmir traders replaced Afgans and went whole hog for trade and commerce with the Punjab and other trade centres in British India and Indian States. After about seven decades, the Indian sub-continent opened up as a vast market for Kashmir's cottage industry and other arts and crafts.

From the earliest times, Ladakh had been an important entrepot for international trade. Kashmiri traders took advantage of this important situation. During Afgan times, Kashmiri traders were denied this opportunity. With the defeat of the Afgans by the Sikhs, Kashmiri trader once again started participating in the trade connected with this entrepot. This time it was with a wider scope. They exchanged, not only the goods produced from Kashmir, but from whole of the subcontinent with goods produced in Tibet, Yarkand, Khotan and Bukhara, etc. Wholesale traders, especially, *Tibet Baqals* (whole-sale suppliers of shawl wool) had posted their agents and built their warehouses in Ladakh for conducting the trade. The articles of the trade, both ways, were the famous shawl wool, tea, salt, silks and carpets.

Besides the trade through Ladakh entrepot, there developed brisk trade between Kashmir and the Indian sub-continent. There existed a great demand in Indian cities for goods produced in Kashmir like shawls, woollen rugs, wood work, papier-mache and other products like saffron, dry fruit opium, etc. In return, Kashmir offered a good market for salt, sugar, tea, spices, medicines and copper and brass utensils besides chinaware. All this trade was capitalized by the Kashmiri trading classes.

SIKH POLICY

Opening of national and international markets provided ample opportunities to the industries and the arts and crafts of Kashmir to grow. It was not, therefore, surprising that there flourished 84³ varieties of crafts and trades during Sikh times. The artisans of Kashmir had not lacked in creating new forms, nor had they given up hard work even under most difficult conditions. They had continued to make contributions, not withstanding the cruel extortions by Pathan Sirdars. Though ample marketing opportunities were available during Sikh times yet, they had subjected arts and crafts to a heavy taxation policy. They were the people who fleeced the weavers through the notorious institution of *Dag-Shal*.⁴ In fact, throughout his rule in Kashmir, Maharaja Ranjit Singh engaged himself in his campaigns to the frontier province. Although he gained political success by making Peshawar as his tributary, yet the tribal chiefs of this area eluded him and kept him constantly engaged in his campaigns against them. Particularly the tribal chiefs of Barakzai clan gave him lot of trouble and he had to lose men and material in subduing them. To finance all these campaigns, he fell upon the people of Kashmir. He, therefore, charged the cultivators of Kashmir heavily and did not spare the shawl industry and other arts and crafts of Kashmir.

Perhaps the Sikh period (1819-46) could have been the golden period for the growth and development of cottage industries and its traditional arts and crafts, had not natural calamities and the policy of over-taxation, spoiled the vast opportunities provided to them by opening up to the Indian and international markets. In fact, establishment of Sikh rule in Kashmir coincided with a famine in the valley (1819). Notwithstanding his chauvinistic attitude towards the political problems in Kashmir, the first Sikh Governor, Moti Ram was a kind-hearted man." By his just and human conduct he restored confidence in the valley".⁵

EARTHQUAKE AND CHOLERA

Moti Ram was succeeded by Hari Singh Nalwa. This man was a hard taskmaster and followed the policy of forced extortions and exactions. No wonder that the number of shawl looms fell from 18,000 to 8,000 in 1923 and the number of weavers from 54,000 to 24,000.⁶ Diwan Kripa Ram was constructive in his ideas and beautified the city of Srinagar. He was more concerned with his personal enjoyment of Kashmir. During his time, in 1827, a severe earthquake shook Kashmir which resulted in great loss of life and property. This was followed by a dreadful epidemic of cholera. "The number of dead was so great that there was not enough cloth to shroud the dead bodies".⁷ He did something for the economic well being of the people especially the weavers but, before long, he fell under the disfavour of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and was recalled to Lahore.

SHIA-SUNNI CLASH—ARTISANS SUFFER

During A.D. 1831, when Kripa Ram was still governor of Kashmir, a Shia-Sunni clash of serious dimension broke out in the Zadibal area of Srinagar city. Whole of the locality was torched. The town was inhabited by the Shia sect of Muslims who were connected with the shawl industry, Papier-mache and embroidery crafts. They had to suffer.

JAMADAR KHUSHAL SINGH'S CRUEL EXACTIONS

Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed his son, prince Sher Singh as the governor of Kashmir in A.D. 1832. He was sent to provide efficient administration and to improve the revenue returns from Kashmir which had started falling. To this intent he solicited the services of Jamadar Khushal Singh, Bhai Gurmukh Singh and Seikh Gulam Mohi-ud-Din. While they were at the job, Maharaja Ranjit Singh desired to visit Kashmir. He directed Jamadar Khushal Singh and Sheikh Gulam Mohi-ud-din to make all arrangements for the entourage of his camp. Taking advantage of these orders, they started, to tyrannise people. "They put in prison all the *Kardars* of Kanwar Sher Singh and began to realize *nazrana* from them⁸." They prepared a statement of all the dues from the *Kardars* and forced them to pay.⁹ They even took forced possession of all the precious things including jewellery from Kanwar Sher Singh's *toshkhana*. Jamadar Khushal Singh collected by force Rs. 7,20,000 besides Rs. 7,00,000 as the cost of precious articles from *Toshkhana*.¹⁰ The campaign for maximising revenue proceeds to please Maharaja Ranjit Singh led to cruel extortions from the artisans of Kashmir. Meanwhile, in the same year (A.D. 1832) in the month of October, there was a premature heavy snowfall when the paddy crops could not be harvested. The whole crop was destroyed. Consequently the valley was struck by a severe famine in the ensuing year (A.D. 1833). Thousands had to flee from Kashmir to save their lives. The population of Kashmir was reduced from eight lakhs to only two lakhs.¹¹

ARTISANS BLIND THEMSELVES AND CUT THEIR FINGERS

The terror and famine-stricken people, then marched to Lahore and Amritsar to make mercy appeals to Maharaja Ranjit Singh to save them from hunger and death. In this long march many succumbed in the way unwept, unsung and unburied.¹² It was about this time that "many of them (shawl weavers) cut off their fingers, some even blinded themselves to escape their miserable conditions¹³." This was done voluntarily to save themselves from the tyranny inflicted on them by the shawl contractors and *kardars*¹⁴.

Jamadar Khushal Singh returned to Lahore on 24th August 1833 with all the collections, expecting appreciation from the Maharaja. But what he received was retort. He was demoted and his property confiscated. Kanwar Sher Singh was recalled and Col. Main Singh was inducted as the governor of Kashmir (A.D. 1834).

KASHMIRI CARPET STIRS MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

Whatever the compulsions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh within the system he was presiding over, personally he was kind hearted and wanted to keep the people of Kashmir happy. He had ordered, "Whosoever of my officers is appointed in Kashmir, before occupying himself with any thing he must make the people happy and earn their good wishes, for Kashmiris are the worshippers of one universal Almighty and their prayer shall bring Maharaja and his kingdom prosperity and felicity¹⁵." He had great desire to visit Kashmir to enjoy its natural beauty, art and culture. Once when he was presented a carpet from Kashmir his instant and spontaneous reaction was that he rolled himself upon it, presuming that he was rolling "on real Kashmir turf in spring, with almond blossoms spread on it and dew glistening on every petal¹⁶." Such was the motivation of the design woven on the loom. The master craftsmen of this beautiful carpet were Fazl Jan, Jabbar Khan and Kamal Joo. The Maharaja rewarded them with a pair of golden bracelets each.¹⁷

WHEN COL. MIAN SINGH ARRIVED IN SRINAGAR

Mian Singh had a very difficult task ahead. This is what he saw when he first arrived in the capital of Kashmir. "On arrival in Srinagar, he witnessed from the balcony of the palace the

signs of distress in the land. Not a single lamp was lit in the city and no cock was crowing, all fowls having been eaten by the famine stricken people¹⁸. Major chunk of the city population was that of shawl weavers and artisans from other arts and crafts. Many of them had been already wiped out by the dreadful cholera epidemic, starvation and sectarian violence between Shias and Sunnis. The left overs were in a pathetic state, struggling for some kind of existence. Col. Mian Singh, as a first step, secured financial assistance from Maharaja Ranjit Singh and imported food stuff, fowls, eggs, sheep, cattle and seeds from the neighbouring hill states of Poonch, Rajouri, Bimber, Jammu and the Punjab. He purchased twenty thousand *maunds* of cereals and sold these to the hungry people of Kashmir at a very cheap price of rupees three a *maund* which cost rupees sixteen per *maund*.¹⁹ He caught hold of all *galadars* (hoarders) and inflicted punishment on them. Even a *mathdari* named Jagan Nath of Anantnag was not spared. He hoarded food grains and sold these in the black market in spite of government orders. He was hanged by the nearest poplar tree²⁰. Col. Mian Singh saw to it that, "there was abundance of cheap foodstuffs available everywhere²¹." By making available food cheap, abolishing many discriminating laws, especially *Zar-i-nikah*²² and ensuring rule of law in Kashmir, he induced many shawl weavers and other artisans to return to their home territory.²³ For the first time after a chain of dreadful events, an atmosphere was created in which the artisans of Kashmir could take advantage of a wide market available for their arts and crafts. Both Sheikh Gulam Mohi-ud-Din and Sheikh Imam-ul-Din followed the line of encouraging the artisans for pursuing their crafts. Sheikh Gulam Mohi-ud-Din solved many difficulties of the *Shal-bafs* who had quit the valley. He organised their return and placed the industry under the supervision of Sheikh Jalal-ud-Din²⁴. Sheikh Imam-ud-Din remitted two annas per *kharvar* of *shali* (paddy) advanced as *nilv*. Consequently the shawl looms which were reduced to a mere 2,000 in 1834 A.D. increased to 7000 by A.D. 1846 and the number of weavers increased from 6,000 to 17,000.²⁵ As a result of cumulative effect looms increased to 11,000 and the weavers to 27,000 when Maharaja Gulab Singh took over.²⁶ Total value of shawl goods produced in 1846 was about Rs. 25,00,000.²⁷

PAPER INDUSTRY UNDER SIKHS

During the Sikh rule in Kashmir, the paper industry employed a large number of people in the city of Srinagar and its suburban towns. Unfortunately it got involved in a grave crisis due to famine conditions in the valley. The workers emigrated from Kashmir on a large scale. Consequently paper production fell to the lowest level. Hari Singh Nalwa tried his best to revive the industry. By giving financial assistance to workers he attracted them back to the valley. They were encouraged to produce all varieties of paper. The paper thus made in Kashmir was superior to the paper made any where in India²⁸. It was an article of export. At the end of Sikh rule, there were 32 paper factories²⁹. Though Sheikh Imam-ud-Din created a lot of confusion, yet art and crafts at the end of the Sikh rule was in a healthy condition.

THE TREATY OF AMRITSAR

The death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (A.D. 1839) knocked the bottom out of the Sikh state in the Punjab. After his death the Sikhs could not pull together to present a united resistance to the British colonialists who pursued the much coveted design of weakening the Sikh state. The confrontation between the Sikhs and the East India Company took place on either bank of the Sutlej. In the war that followed, the betrayal by its own commanders resulted in the defeat of the Sikh army. Raja Gulab Singh who was the governor of Jammu, had due to his own ambition managed to remain out of the conflict and was therefore able to play his cards from the position of strength after the defeat of Sikhs. In fact Gulab Singh had found favours with the British rulers right from 1842, when he had helped them, indirectly, by seeking neutrality when a mutinous sikh soldiery had launched an expedition

against the Afgans. Therefore, apparently, to keep Gulab Singh in good humour, but primarily for their political interests, they made him the independent ruler of Jammu and Kashmir state by means of a treaty called the Treaty of Amritsar, 16th March, 1846.³⁰ The transfer of the territory was made, in consideration of Rs. 75 lakh, which he had to pay to them. The treaty was as good as a sale deed.

KASHMIR PURCHASED

Maharaja Gulab Singh was strongly obsessed with the conviction that he had purchased Kashmir for Rs. 75 lakh and that it was his personal property. In fact all the Dogra Maharajas carried this conviction. Even as back as A.D. 1918, Maharaja Pratap Singh wrote to his Chief Minister, "As you are already aware, the proprietary rights in all the lands of Kashmir belong to the ruling chief exclusively, for the simple reason that the territories of Kashmir were purchased by my late lamented grandfather, Maharaja Gulab Singh, and hence any sale of such land by any one else is illegal³¹." Precisely because of this reason Maharaja Gulab Singh was at pains to harvest the fruits of investment in Kashmir. He taxed the people heavily and exacted money by whatever means it could be possible. "Where his interest required, he did not hesitate to resort to tricks and stratagems which would in ordinary life be considered dishonourable³²."

GULAB SINGH BRINGS LAW AND ORDER

To achieve his objective, there was great need of establishing law and order. He acted firmly. To begin with he curbed the refractory chiefs of Bomba and Khoka tribes and safeguarded the valley from their incursions. He also launched a vigorous campaign against dacoity which had become the order of the day. The *Galwans* (dacoits of those days) were caught, put to summary trials and then publicly hanged. Their bodies were kept suspended on gibbets for months together.³³ These steps gave great relief to the poorer sections of the community who were either cultivators or *shal-bafs* and other artisans.

MAHARAJA GULAB SINGH PROTECTS THE SHAWL INDUSTRY

After establishing peace and order, he turned towards taking some welfare measures. The first thing which he did was to collect *Shali* (the staple food of Kashmiris) in large granaries³⁴ and rationed³⁵ it to the city population. Shawl weavers and other artisan classes formed the major chunk of the population of the city of Srinagar. *Shal-bafs* contributed substantially to his revenue proceeds. The revenue returns from the shawl industry were at times more than the land revenue³⁶. He therefore, tried to protect this industry. *Dagshawl* was reorganised. He also ordered that the weaver should be charged the tax per loom according to the actual work done by him on the loom. Previously he was charged Rs. 150 per loom³⁷ whether he worked on the loom or not. He also freed him from the binding of not changing his employer. This gave him the confidence to work as a free man and without being under bondage. All these steps resulted in a steep rise of the industry under Maharaja Ranbir Singh who succeeded his father in February A.D. 1856.

THE INDUSTRY REACHES ITS HEIGHT UNDER MAHARAJA RANBIR SINGH

Although the industry soared to great heights under Maharaja Ranbir Singh, yet its decline was caused by various extraneous factors. The industry made a mark both in the quality of the shawl and its quantity. "All are agreed that the very best shawls ever produced in Kashmir, were made during the time of Maharaja Ranbir Singh between the years 1865 and 1892. Their texture was the finest, their colours soft and kindly and their patterns of the eastern style, most elaborate."³⁸ The export of shawls averaged between 25 and 28 lakh of rupees between the years A.D. 1860 and A.D. 1870.³⁹ With all the encouragement which Maharaja gave to the weavers, their condition was far from satisfactory. Their

wages, service conditions and the burden of taxes was so unfavourable, that they were forced to raise a standard of revolt against the *Dagshawal*⁴⁰ which colluded with the *Karkhandars* to exploit them to the hilt. The revolt took place on 29 April, A.D. 1865. It was crushed. However the Maharaja, after having learnt about the causes of the revolt, remitted Rs. 11 from the shawl tax of a weaver in A.D. 1868⁴¹ reducing it to Rs. 35. It gave him some relief. But it was too late. It was given at a stage when the long shadows of industry's imminent collapse had already been cast. To help the industry, the Maharaja got established a shawl warehouse in New Street, London.⁴² About Rs. 1,30,000 worth shawls were exported through this warehouse. Eighty per cent of shawl trade conducted through this warehouse was shared by France. But before long the apple cart was upset when the Franco-German war (A.D. 1870) broke out much to the extreme disappointment of the shawl weavers of Kashmir. It was followed by a Shia-Sunni riot in 1872 A.D. The cause was class conflict. The *Karkhandars* belonged to the Shia sect and the *Shal-bafs* mostly to the Sunni sect.

THE MAHARAJA ATTEMPTS TO SAVE THE INDUSTRY AFTER FRANCO-GERMAN WAR CRISIS

The shawl industry almost came to an end. Maharaja Ranbir Singh tried to intervene by lending some support to the industry. He affected purchases worth lakhs of rupees to keep *Karkhandars* going. He also paid Rs. 3 lakh for the rehabilitation of the victims of the Shia-Sunni riot.⁴³ The price of paddy rationed to the *Shal-bafs* or other artisans was reduced. Again, in 1875, the tax on shawl weavers was reduced from Rs. 35 to Rs. 20. All these efforts of the Maharaja were frustrated when one more famine struck in A.D. 1878-79. Thousands of people died and most of them *Shal-bafs*. They died like flies.⁴⁴ There was an exodus of weavers either to villages or out of Kashmir. "Many of the survivors have now found occupation in the manufacture of carpets"⁴⁵.

OTHER ARTS AND CRAFTS ENCOURAGED

It was not only the shawl industry which Maharaja Ranbir Singh tried to save but also other arts and crafts. He provided them assistance. In order to make the arts and crafts of Kashmir popular and find markets for them, he organised exhibitions in India and abroad. One such exhibition was held at Calcutta in 1884 under the orders of Lord Rippon, the Viceroy of India. The articles exhibited were shawls, carpets, *pashm*, paper, furs, skins, *gabbas*, *namdas*, ornamented silver and bronze wares⁴⁶. He also introduced the practice of organising a state level fair in Jammu in the month of November every year. In this fair the artisans of Kashmir exhibited their products. The best exhibits were awarded prizes.

PEASANT SUFFERS FOR SHAL-BAF

Next to agriculture, the shawl industry of Kashmir had so much permeated the social and economic life of Kashmir, that nothing could be left apart from its direct or indirect impact. Kashmiri cultivators, for instance, could not change the price of *shali* as would be necessary according to the forces of supply and demand. The price of *shali* was fixed at Rs. 1/4 per *Kharwar*, right from the time of Maharaja Gulab Singh upto the joining of Wingate as the first settlement officer in A.D. 1887.⁴⁷ The poor cultivator had to suffer, simply because the shawl barons of the city would not be prepared to give higher wages to the shawl weavers in case the food prices would go up. At the same time when the shawl became a craze in France and other European countries Kashmiri arts and crafts were in great demand. There were between 34 and 36 arts and crafts industries extant in A.D. 1846.⁴⁸

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS DISPLAY ARTS AND CRAFTS OF KASHMIR

Art exhibitions were the passion of the Victorian Age in England. There was hardly any exhibition of

importance which did not display elegant pieces of Kashmiri art and craft besides its legendary shawls. These included fine specimen of papier-mache, wood-carving, embroidery, metalware, etc. In the Great Exhibition of 1857, Maharaja Gulab Singh sent stunning exhibits.⁴⁹ Such major exhibitions were the International Exhibition of A.D. 1862, the colonial Indian Exhibition of A.D. 1886, and the Glasgow Exhibition of A.D. 1895. Invariably Kashmiri arts and crafts were conspicuous and popular in these exhibitions. A rich collection of rare masterpieces of Indian arts and crafts including Kashmir shawls, papier-mache, wood-carvings, embroideries and metal work formed the part of the list of items drawn when India Museum and South Kingston Museum were amalgamated in A.D. 1880.⁵⁰ In the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London, there are even today, nine Kashmiri painted boxes presented to it by Queen Victoria.⁵¹ All the crafts of Kashmir having specimen in these exhibitions became popular in Europe during the 19th century. The details about some of the important artisan industries of the 19th century are given below.

THE SHAWL INDUSTRY

Shawl production in the 19th century slowly developed the features of capitalistic production. In earlier times, the master craftsman, himself invested money and organised its production under his own guidance. But slowly, the persons traditionally belonging to the family connected with shawl trade, and not necessarily a master craftsman, organised shawl production by investing money and employing a master craftsman on wages. The production was organised in, what are called, the *karkhanas* (factories) and the owner of the *karkhana* came to be called *karkhandars*. He employed 300 to 400 weavers.⁵² There were three kinds of *karkhandars*; *nukdee*, *jamakharchi*, and *anantnagi*.⁵³ *nukdee karkhandar* was a man of sufficient means, who provided his own capital, purchased the raw material and paid the wages. It was this kind of *karkhandar* who organised production in a big way. Their number in A.D. 1846 was 3,500.⁵⁴ On the other hand a *jamakharchi* organised the production in the homes of the individual weavers. Two persons worked on one loom. This type of a *karkhandar* arranged finances either from the Government or from the moneylenders.⁵⁵ He produced shawls on a smaller scale and the quality of the shawls was not very good. Their number was 2,000.⁵⁶ The *anantnagi* belonged to the town of Anantnag. The stuff produced from that place was rated inferior.⁵⁷ Some of the famous *karkhandars* and shawl merchants were: Mulla Ahmad Khan Haji, Muhammad Sadiq⁵⁸ (Gulab Singh's time), Sonallah Shawl, Haji Mukhtar Shah, Saifullah Baba and Mohi-ud-Din Gangoo⁵⁹ (Ranbir Singh's time).

METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION OF SHAWL PROCEEDS

The actual production of shawl involved at least nineteen persons connected with as many specialized processes. All the specialists were to be paid from the proceeds of the shawl earnings. Interestingly the payments were closely connected with the sale of paddy (the staple food of Kashmiris) to the *Shal-bafs*. How were the proceeds of the shawl earning distributed. William Moorcroft explains with the help of the actual account which one Mohammad Joo maintained:

A supply of 150 ass loads of paddy,
was made to him from time to time.
Rs. 3/2 per ass load and small pulse,
at the rate of Rs. 5/- per ass load.
The amount comes to,

Paddy	Rs. 469
Pulse	Rs. 75

Stamp Duty	Rs. 230
Balance to be paid at another time	Rs. 76
	<u>Rs. 850</u>

Mohammad Joo in account with himself in adjustment of profit and loss:

Selling price of paddy in open market was	
Rs. 2/8 per ass load	Rs. 375
The rate of pulse was Rs. 4 per ass load	Rs. 60
	<u>Rs. 435</u>
The loss incurred by him	(Rs 544 - 435) = Rs 109

Thus Mohammad Joo received nominally Rs. 850 reduced by stamp duty and losses on resale as under:

Stamp duty	Rs. 230
Less by resale	Rs. 109
Advance of material	Rs. 170
	<u>Rs. 509</u>
Thus the remaining balance	Rs. 850 - 509 = 341

The balance of Rs. 341 is left with him to pay the wages of the forty shawl weavers for about 4 to 5 months, his own profit and many other artists mentioned (elsewhere in this work including house rent.)

PRICE OF SHAWLS

The prices of shawls ordinarily ranged between Rs. 50 and Rs. 2000⁶⁰ depending on the quality of the stuff and design. Loom-made shawls would be five times costlier than hand-made shawls. A first class shawl woven on the loom and weighing seven lbs would cost £300 and this would include:⁶¹

The cost of material	£ 30
The wages of labour	£ 150
Duty	£ 70
Miscellaneous	£ 50
Total	<u>£ 300</u>

One *karkhandar* Mirza Ali, produced a shawl which fetched Rs. 12,500.⁶² In fact shawls were of many kinds which differed in the quality of its stuff and design. The shawls were either loom made or hand worked (details discussed elsewhere in this work).

EXPORTS

The shawls of superior quality were mostly in demand in foreign countries. French agents purchased these in Kashmir and exported them to France. The value of shawls exported between A.D. 1851 and 1865 is given in a tabular form :⁶³

Year	Total Value	Year	Total Value	Year	Total Value
1851	£ 171,709	1856	£ 209,279	1861	£ 351,093
1852	£ 146,270	1857	£ 290,640	1862	£ 459,441
1853	£ 215,659	1858	£ 227,618	1863	£ 303,157
1854	£ 170,153	1859	£ 310,027	1864	£ 275,391
1855	£ 197,890	1860	£ 252,828	1865	£ 254,498

During the year 1871-72 shawls worth Rs. 13 lakh were exported of which about 9 lakh worth went to Europe and the rest to the Eastern markets.⁶⁴ Out of the total export made to European countries :

- 80 % went to France,
- 10 % went to the USA,
- 5 % went to Italy,
- 2 % went to Russia,
- 1 % went to Great Britain,
- 1 % went to Germany.⁶⁵

In 1886-87 when the shawl industry had, to some extent, recovered, exports worth Rs. 12,10,012 were made.⁶⁶

PRICE OF SHAWL WOOL

Availability of shawl wool would generally present difficulties. The wool used to come from distant and difficult terrains. Sometimes the roads would get blocked due to heavy snowfall. The price of wool, therefore, fluctuated. Further, the material had to come from livestock which was prone to epidemics. During the 19th century, there had been constant increase in the price of shawl wool. Between A.D. 1794 and A.D. 1817, the price increase was as shown below⁶⁷:

- 1794 to A.D. 1807, rate per *trak* Rs. 8
- 1807 to A.D. 1813, rate per *trak* Rs. 16 to 20
- 1813 to A.D. 1817, rate per *trak* Rs. 16 to 22
- A.D. 1817, rate per *trak* Rs. 25

"It had literally been as high as forty rupees per *trak* owing, partly, to the ravages made by an epidemic amongst the cattle and partly to the new demand arising for wool from the British possessions in India⁶⁸." When G.T. Vegne visited Kashmir, Government had assumed the monopoly of shawl wool and it charged 20% profit⁶⁹ after selling it to the wool merchant.

NUMBER OF LOOMS AND WEAVERS

The number of looms and the weavers working on them, during the first half of the 19th century, is given as table⁷⁰ on next page.

The value of trade from Kashmir to British India in 1908 was Rs. 1,41,757 and shawls accounted 91% of it.⁷¹ "Amritsar was a thriving centre for long distance luxury trade between the Ganges valley and both Kashmir and Afganistan."⁷²

S. No.	Year	No. of looms operational	No. of workers working
1.	1800	18,000	54,000
2.	1809	16,000	48,000
3.	1813	24,000	72,000
4.	1819	18,000	54,000
5.	1823	8,000	24,000
6.	1834	2,000	6,000
7.	1838	6,000	18,000
8.	1846	7,000	17,000
9.	1847	6,000	15,000

From serial 1 to 7, 3 weavers have been taken as working per loom.

For serials 8 & 9, 2.5 weavers have been taken as such.

During the second half of the century between 1846-72, when the industry was at its height, it gave employment to about 30,000 to 40,000 weavers.⁷³ Total employment figure could be on the higher side, if the assistance of only five specialists is taken into account. There were thousands of spinners and others connected with the collection and distribution of wool besides those connected with marketing operations.

CLOUT OF THE SHAWL BARONS

The shawl barons of Kashmir valley, during the second half of the 19th century, directly or indirectly influenced the whole economy of the State. When this great industry collapsed after the Franco-German war, it resulted in wage-cuts, unemployment and tremendous fall in Government revenue. The Government being interested in its survival for its own interest, did not allow the increase in the price of *shali*. In fact it ensured that food stuff was available at cheaper rates to the city population, a major section of which was constituted of *Shal-bafs*. The class of officials who too lived in the city of Srinagar supported this formulation for obvious reasons. For the 41 years of Dogra rule (up to A.D. 1887) except the year 1879, the price of *shali* had not been permitted to change according to the market forces. It was kept fixed at Rs. 41 per *kharwar*.⁷⁴ In the earlier years it was not increased precisely because the shawl industry was very prosperous and the Maharaja never wanted to displease the bosses controlling the industry for it would make food costlier for the shawl weavers necessitating increase in their wages and fall in their profits. But during the later years, the industry had come down to the lowest ebb and the Government wanted to help its survival by sustaining the impoverished weavers with cheap food. It was the duty of the shawl barons to come to the rescue of his traditional employees and save both the cultivators and the *shal-bafs*. Maharaja Ranbir Singh did play his part, but not in full measure. The settlement officer before W.R. Lawrence, A Wingate had advocated strongly the cause of the poor cultivators for increasing the price of *shali*, but the Darbar would not agree to it. The city population would get angry and the strong coterie of Hindu officials would not agree to it. On the recommendation of the then Resident of Kashmir, Haji Mukhtar Shah was accepted by Wingate to advocate the cause of the cultivators as desired by him.⁷⁵ Wingate had presumed that since the officials belonged to Hindus and, therefore would be opposed to enhancement and Mukhtar Shah being a co-religionist, would strongly plead the cause of cultivators. But to his utter disappointment, Mukhtar Shah wrote in his report, "The shawl trade is gone and all

artisans are ruined. If the cultivators are all at once allowed to sell at any price they please, the artisan classes will have to buy dear and will be still further ruined. Caution must be exercised in introducing any cash settlement so that the prices may be kept down".⁷⁶ This 'honest tradesman' could not for a moment realise that *shali* cultivation was at least as much important as the shawl industry and the peasant-son of the soil could not be brushed aside for all the time. Mukhtar Shah was himself a shawl baron and he could not act both culprit and judge. Economic interests cut across communal considerations. Vested interests in the shawl industry played a sinister game to subvert the whole economy for their personal aggrandisement.

PAPER

Right from the Mughal times till the beginning of Sikh rule in Kashmir, the paper industry employed a large number of people in the city of Srinagar and its suburbs. But due to repeated famines during the Sikh period and later the order of the Government of India to discontinue the use of Kashmir paper for Persian writings⁷⁷, discouraged the industry. In spite of these difficulties it continued its existence. The specimen of Kashmiri paper displayed in the Lahore Exhibition of 1864, was considered the best of all native manufacture and was available every-where.⁷⁸ In fact during the famine of 1819, the specialists of this industry had started emigrating from Kashmir. Though Hari Singh Nalwa tried to bring them back by helping them, but some of them had established their manufactories in Sialkot. About two hundred shops of paper manufacture had been established by these emigrants by 1835.⁷⁹

GOOD QUALITY PAPER

The paper produced then was durable and was reputed for its quality. It was handmade and not mill-made. "It is distinguished by its fine gloss and polish, its evenness and freedom from flaws, also by its white wax-like colour and appearance".⁸⁰ Even in 1873 A.D., there existed 32 paper factories. About 12 persons worked in each factory. The cost of the best quality paper was about Rs. 3 per qr. of 24 sheets.⁸¹ As back as 1848, Kashmir continued to export to the Punjab⁸², paper worth Rs. 15,000 in spite of the fact that the production was discouraged due to Government order and the famine of A.D. 1833. Maharaja Ranbir Singh did his best to save the industry from extinction. The demand for paper thus produced by this industry increased in Government offices. Kashmir supplied its best quality paper to the Punjab Government⁸³. Despite efforts made by Maharaja Ranbir Singh the industry appeared on its last legs during the time of W.R. Lawrence. The reason was obvious. "The industry is declining, and the recent order of the state, that paper made in Srinagar gaol is to be used by all offices, will hasten the extinction of what once was an important and renowned manufacture".⁸⁴ Obviously the private manufacturer of this industry could not survive when its principal consumer purchased paper from the other source. There were still 36 families connected with the manufacture of paper, struggling for existence. The revenue consideration of all the previous governments proved a strong impediment in the growth of this industry.

PROCESS OF PAPER MAKING

Paper making was a unique handicraft in Kashmir. It was made of pulp. Pulp is a mixture of rags (cotton and linen and a small quantity of hemp). The materials are pounded under a lever-mill run on water power or manual labour (by feet). The mortar in which the rags are pounded is made of lime and stone.⁸⁵ In its first process, the rags and hemp are pounded separately. Consistent pounding takes place for 24 hours. After pounding, the materials are washed, cleaned and pounded again. In order to whiten the pulp, slaked lime and crude carbonate soda is procured⁸⁶ from the Sindh Valley and *Dachigam Nallah* are used. This process is repeated five to twenty times⁸⁷ as required by the quality of the paper to be produced.

Between each process, the pulp is placed in a trough created by tying some length of cloth to the waists of two persons about six feet apart. These persons stand in a deep stream with the pulp in the trough of cloth in the water. They take care in keeping the edges of the cloth above the water level. They stir the pulp by their hands and clean it of all dirt which passes through the mesh of the cloth.⁸⁸ After every washing, the pulp is drained and made into one square foot slabs and bleached under the sun. These slabs are turned four times to ensure their full bleaching and drying. The slab is turned into a creamy white colour.

The pulp is then taken to factories located in Naoshehra—a suburb of the city of Srinagar. Here the pulp is placed in stone troughs (receptacles). A *hauze* is placed by the side of a *hauzewhol*. In this wooden sort of tub water and desirable quantity of the pulp are mixed. A frame fixed with a screen of thin and fine reeds is furnished to the *hauzewhol*. He dips the frame in the *hauze* and let it float on the surface of the mixture of pulp and water. A thin layer of this substance settles on the screen of the frame after the water gets drained out of the screen. This layer of the pulp becomes a sheet of paper after the subsequent processes of separating and drying. The process is repeated to get many sheets of paper as time and labour would permit. The sheets are bleached under the sun and then collected in quires of 24 sheets. These are then, smoothly cut according to the size required. The sheets are polished with pumice stone⁸⁹ (*curuckttu*) and their surface glazed with rice water.⁹⁰ Final polish is rendered with onyx stone.

TYPES OF PAPER

Broadly, only three types of paper were produced. The top quality was called *farmashi*. This was also known as *Mahraji*. It was highly glazed. It contained sixteen parts of selected rags and only two parts of hemp. Due to good quality of raw material and more labour put in making this kind of paper, it was considered the finest quality.

The second type was known as *dahmashi*. This paper was made of pulp which contained 177 parts of rags and three parts of hemp fibre. It was of good quality.

The third type, which was generally in use during the time of W.R. Lawrence, was made of the pulp which did not contain any hemp. This type was known as *kalamdani*. One more type of paper was made for packing etc. It was coloured, are called *kangmaz*.

PAPIER-MACHE

Papier-mache, *karikalamdani*, *kari munakashi* or lacquer work is the traditional⁹¹ art of Kashmir as already explained in the previous chapter. It is also known as *kumangiri* and this name takes us to the source of its origin. *Kumangiri* means illustrating the bows and arrows of Persian soldiers.⁹² The name, therefore, justifies the origin of the art that in Persia. There is still a locality in the city of Srinagar named as *kumangar pura* where the craftsmen pursuing the craft are concentrated. Like Iranians, they are *Shia* Muslims. Many of the older generation speak Persian⁹³ and have a burning desire to have pilgrimage to Persia, die there and get buried in that land of their faith. Young Persian artists also visited Kashmir and made fortunes. The first influx of Persian master artisans took place during the time of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. They excelled in Mughal times. During the Pathan and Sikh rules, the industry declined so much so that in 1819, there were left only 40 artists.⁹⁴ In Kashmir the production of pen-cases was only 1,000.⁹⁵ Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent some artists to Lahore and gave them the work of painting the ceiling of the Baradari Building of Shalimar.⁹⁶

IMMIGRATION OF PAPIER-MACHE CRAFTSMEN

There seems to have taken place one more immigration about the middle of the 19th century. "Many of

today's craftsmen date the arrival of their families to that time, and the papier-mache painting done in Kashmir, in the second half of the last century is very often almost identical to what was being done in Persia at the same period.⁹⁷ In fact the art of papier-mache exquisitely decorated in oriental motifs and beautifully lacquered, was well known in the east many centuries before it was introduced in Europe.⁹⁸

ARTICLES PRODUCED AND PAINTINGS DONE

Originally the articles produced were made of paper, the pulp. The most conspicuous of these articles were pen cases. These were of several varieties, chief of these being *Masnadi* or royal and *Farsi* or Persian. *Masnadi* are articles of table furniture, bulky type and the *Farsi* are portable.⁹⁹ The material used for making articles of papier-mache was the coarse native paper, pulped and moulded into different shapes. These shapes or articles were then coated with white paint on their surface. After many other specialised processes, various types of designs were worked over the surface in very attractive colours. "The ground of the colouring is commonly metallic, of gold or of tin and pigments employed are cochineal or the Kirmis insect, ultra marine from Yarkand, white lead from Russia, as well as Verdigris from Surat, and possibly from Britain.¹⁰⁰ The best varnish used is that of *kahruba* (amber or copal) otherwise it is obtained from resin of the aloe or the storax.¹⁰¹

DESIGNS

The craft had become very famous and popular due to its attractive and colourful designs. It is believed that once a designer painted a rose. It was so perfect that a butterfly sat on it. The artist felt so much encouraged, that he devised a mixture of varnish and scent and applied it to the rose. It looked like a live rose and was full of fragrance. That night, it is said, the painter was inflicted with blindness. It was then believed that he was struck blind because he had attempted to imitate the Creator.¹⁰²

The designs have two categories—raised and flat. The raised design has several diversities depending on the amount of relief given to it. For the raised designs elevation is achieved by first forming the ground of the ornaments with white lead and a solution of glue. The spots are then marked with white paint and after drying, trimmed accurately with a knife. These spots are then coated with a layer of glue and then colour of the ornament filled. Finishing touches are given. It is by this method that designs showing birds and butterflies amongst flowers and foliage, on flat surface are created. Such type of raised designs are sometimes made on palanquins, elephant *howdas* and also on the walls and ceilings of rooms.¹⁰³

The content of the designs is taken either from the Persian tradition or the natural environment in Kashmir. Articles of bigger size, generally follow the Persian tradition, e.g. old Persian paintings, Turkish and Mongolian princes playing polo, themes from Firdausi's *Shahnama* etc. From Kashmir's natural environment, they have been painting, its flora and fauna, like the narcissus, hyacinth, daffodil, iris, daisy, the rose and the birds like the golden oriole, the kingfisher, the flashing turquoise, etc. They also paint the flowering peach and almond blossoms along with intertwined boughs and twigs with birds perched on them.

The tools used in working on the designs are the brushes made of the hair of shawl-wool goat, the pencils of the hairs of the fur of a cat, a sharp knife, a small cutting chisel, shell for mixing colours, agate for smoothing the surface, stone slab and a muller.

WOOD INTRODUCED

Articles of wood also were introduced and the designs of papier-mache worked over them. On the

whole a variety of articles was introduced. These were boxes, trays, book-covers, furniture articles, chairs, palanquins and *howdas* etc. Even walls and ceilings were painted with papier-mache designs. Snuff-boxes, pen-cases and trays were in demand from Kabul. At one time papier-mache articles worth about Rs. 10,000 were exported to Kabul and about 20,000 worth to France and other European countries.¹⁰⁴ Papier-mache articles formed one of the most attractive items in the list of exhibits displayed in the 19th century art exhibitions held outside Kashmir. Due to the presence of French shawl agents in Kashmir, many items like, boxes, vases and *surahis* were produced by papier-mache master-craftsmen. Maharaja Ranbir Singh presented papier-mache coffee sets to his European friends.¹⁰⁵ He encouraged this industry. In 1876, he remitted the tax on papier-mache workers¹⁰⁶. About five hundred rupees were collected as tax from these workers. At the end of the 19th century, when Sherghari palace was rebuilt, papier-mache painters decorated its interiors. These paintings reminded one of the old miniature pictures of Mughal interior decorations.

CARPET WEAVING

Carpet making made its beginning from Central and Western Asia where carpets were used to cover earthen floors. It was the only decorative art of the nomadic people of that time. It continued to be a hand made craft until 14th century when it had developed into complete work of art. By the 17th century carpets, "...were made almost exclusively as objects of beauty, luxury and utility. ... Their designs and execution reached its highest artistic quality in Persia in the 15th and 16th centuries¹⁰⁷."

IMPORTANCE

During 16th and 17th centuries oriental carpets were considered as valuable objects of decorative art in Europe. People preferred to hang these on walls and balconies or cover the furniture articles rather than covering their floors. "Dutch paintings of 17th century interiors often show oriental carpets used as chest or table covers¹⁰⁸."

The very fact that Moorcoft got a carpet made of shawl wool prepared in A.D. 1823 and that a fascinating carpet was presented to Maharaja Ranjit Singh which extraordinarily stirred his emotions, shows that highly skilled craftsmen lived in Kashmir during Sikh times and pursued this craft. Beautiful specimen of carpets, woven during the first half of the 19th century are on display even today in the State Museum at Srinagar. One important factor that impeded the growth of arts and crafts during this century was the repeated occurrence of famines. The devastating famines of 1818-19, 1832-33 and 1878-79 led to the exodus of artisans from Kashmir besides the huge number which died of starvation. The carpet industry could not have been an exception to this national calamity. Whosoever of the carpet weavers was saved from the clutches of starvation and death, managed to emigrate to the Punjab and started carpet weaving over there. They presented a tough competition to their brethren in Kashmir. "Srinagar has a formidable rival in Amritsar, where a large colony of Kashmir weavers is settled and considerable capital is employed in the manufacture of carpets¹⁰⁹."

PILE CARPETS

Pile carpets are called *kaleen* in Kashmir as in other parts of India. These were perhaps introduced by Saracens in India who had learnt the art from Persians; the patterns over them are, invariably of Persian origin.¹¹⁰ The two carpets exhibited in India Museum in A.D. 1893 and arranged by Vincent Robinson belong to the early part of 18th century¹¹¹ and are the original ones, categorised as inherited handicrafts. "The ground in one is pale yellow and in the other rose of varying shades and the floral pattern decorating in half-tones of variety of colours¹¹²."

KASHMIR CARPETS BECOME POPULAR IN EUROPE

Trade in Kashmiri carpets sprung in the middle of the 19th century when these were brought to the notice of the English people very prominently by the then Indian Government. Thus Kashmiri carpets formed one of the conspicuous items in Chicago World Fair in 1890.¹¹³ Besides the two original Kashmiri carpets which Vincent Robinson loaned to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, he sold them one original *Ardabil* carpet. "Gold medals' and wreaths of gold were awarded for Kashmir carpets in the exhibitions of London and Paris; they were supplied to spread on the floors of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle; they were made of silk and *pashmina* wool, soft and so pliable that they were suited to cover the daintiest of furniture"¹¹⁴.

THE INDUSTRY MAKES PROGRESS AT THE ADVENT OF THE 20th CENTURY

The standard of these carpets started falling very fast due to the fact that the English importers wanted to obtain these on cheap rates and in the least possible time. Though the standard was falling, yet the trade was monopolised by Europeans and huge investments were made by them. With the advent of 20th century, the industry made tremendous progress.

One more reason for the boost which the carpet weaving got was the setback received by the shawl industry in the Franco-German War (1870) and the severe famine in 1877-79. The shawl weavers who survived the deadly famine were engaged in the carpet industry. Maharaja Ranbir Singh advanced loans to the *karkhandars* of shawl industry to start carpet weaving¹¹⁵ which could provide employment to the starving *shal-bafs*. The French agents taking cue readily switched on to carpet trade and encouraged carpet production in Kashmir. The first experiment was made by M. Bigex. He was followed by Mon. H. Dauvergne who was a French shawl agent. He lived in Kashmir between A.D. 1865 and 1882. He had gained a lot of experience in the shawl trade and was also an expert in dyeing. With this background, his carpet factory was a great success. Subsequently this factory was purchased by Messrs. C.M. Hadow and Co. C.M. Hadow started his own factory also and both of these employed 2,303 weavers.¹¹⁶ No wonder that Francis Young Husband recorded, "Carpets have now surpassed shawls in order of importance".¹¹⁷

SHAWL WEAVING METHOD INTRODUCED IN CARPETS

Traditionally carpet weaving followed a coloured picture of a design. This method would take long time to produce a carpet. In A.D. 1875 when Prince of Wales followed by King Edward VII, was to visit Jammu, Maharaja Ranbir Singh wanted a carpet to be woven which could cover the Ajaib Ghar Hall. The time was short and the carpet to be woven very big. The number of carpet weavers available were only thirteen.¹¹⁸ So the weavers on the advice of one Albert Mir¹¹⁹, decided to weave the desired carpet by the shawl method of symbols. It could at best require additional helpers. The experiment was successful. From this day onwards, this novel method was adopted in weaving carpets.

On an upright loom, cotton warp threads are arranged horizontally parallel to each other. The pattern is woven not directly from a design in colour but by cramming the symbols and applying these to produce a design. The balls of wool of different colours hung down from the top which the weaver uses as per required symbols. The weaver ties the threads of desired colours. Then a double cotton twine is threaded through by fingers and in the warp, each thread is cut. When the carpet is completed, its surface is evened by clipping it with shears.

KASHMIRI CARPETS DEVELOP THEIR OWN PERSONALITY

Pile carpets, though Persian in their origin, have been so much adapted to Kashmir's natural environment and infused with local motifs that they have developed a personality of their own. They

look characteristically Kashmiri both in their content and form. This however, does not mean that they have rejected altogether the Iranian and Central Asian designs which have become a part of Kashmiri tradition.

"The design of Persian carpets is based on flowers, birds, beasts and trees. This rosette representing a tranquil pool at the heart of the ideal Persian garden, is part of a carpet woven in silk for the mosque at *Ardabil* in Northern Persia, in 1534; its pattern of leaves and petals also resembles the designs used for the mosaics inside the domes of many mosques".¹²⁰

In their designs, the Kashmir carpet weavers show the minutest objects of Kashmir's natural environment, e.g. the green turf, the almond blossoms and the dew on the petals. They are able to create an overall effect of a beautiful spring. The oldest carpets are of the floral designs. Wild animals and fish in the water also are depicted.

THREE TYPES OF CARPETS

Carpets are three types : the pile carpets, the *gabbas* and the *namdas*. *Gabba* is a product of 20th century. It slowly evolved from the first quarter of this century. *Gabbas* are prepared from blankets, old or new and are of various forms and patterns. These may be applique (*Dal-Gabbas*), embroidered, applique-cum-embroidered or printed. This industry was, in fact, encouraged by Maharaja Ranbir Singh who invited experts like Muhammad Bhat, Rasul Magre, and Nur Sheikh who were experts in *gabba* making¹²¹. The industry is concentrated in Anantnag.

Namda, on the other hand, was an article of import from Central Asia probably from the beginning of the Christian era.¹²² In the ancient documents of the third century A.D., there is the earliest mention of felt rugs or *namdas*.¹²³ *Namdas* were imported from the towns of Sinkiang, chiefly Kashgar and Yarkand. *Namdas* those days used to be plain-felt carpets. Kashmiri embroiderers made these most attractive by working colourful designs over them. These *namdas* became very popular and were in great demand in foreign countries, especially the USA. But due to the closure of the Leh Treaty Road, import of *namdas* into Kashmir was stopped. That led to the starting of *namda* production in Kashmir itself during the 20th century.

WOOD WORK AND CARVING

Walnut wood is generously available in Kashmir. Its surface exposes veined soft and mellow colours. The wood is hard and suitable for the craftsman to produce carved designs. In his workmanship a Kashmiri is surpassed by few¹²⁴ and perhaps he is second to none in his skill as a designer.¹²⁵ They select a piece of wood carefully and then the artist, very meticulously, draws a design in free hand with a black pencil. No instruments are used for it. The master craftsman, then, hands it over to a carver to do the broader work and leaves finer things to be done by himself. For instance, in a floral design with details of leaves and stems etc., he works in producing petals and leaves with the help of chisels and leaves the minutest details to be carved by the master craftsman.

ENGRAVING, UNDER-CUT AND RAISED DESIGNS

Carving on walnut wood is a traditional craft in Kashmir. The work has three types, the engraving, the under-cut, and the raised. The wood carver with his tremendous skill, using knives of different shapes, sometimes hollows out certain parts of a design and sometimes undercuts and produces flowers, leaves intertwined creepers and dragons etc. Motifs like *sosan*, *chinar*, *badam*, *dachhi* (grapes) and *mazarposh* (iris) are designed.¹²⁶

Kashmiri wood carving had become internationally famous during the 19th century. Fine specimen



Excellent Specimen of Papier Mache Art





Carpet - Kashmir Ardebil Wool



Char Bakash



Beet Dar

of wood carving had been exhibited in 19th century exhibitions. Presence of these articles in the London Museum confirms this fact.

Craftsmen are also adept in creating designs out of thin pieces of pine wood of different sizes and shades in fashioning ceilings. These designs are known as *khutumbandi* (already discussed in earlier chapters). Earlier such ceilings were designed for shrines and mosques, but in the 19th century we find such ceilings in houseboats and mansions.

WOODWORK ANCIENT MOST CRAFT

Woodwork of Kashmir is nearly as old as its forests. Marks of a rope around the trunks of trees at higher elevations have been found. This has led to the impression that boats were tied to the trunks of these trees. "...In ancient Hindu books there are directions for ensuring that the timber is felled in the winter month when the sap is down and just before it rises, and also as to how it should be seasoned for some years before it is cut up, and then allowed to season again in planks¹²⁷." *Rajtarangini* refers to numerous articles made of wood—even houses and bridges.

BERNIERS LIST OF ARTICLES

All those articles of woodwork which Francois Bernier mentions¹²⁸ on his visit to Kashmir during the 17th century, continued to be produced during the 19th century. These articles were *palki*, bedsteads, trunks, ink stands, boxes and various other articles. Very handsome screens, tables, panels, boxes¹²⁹ etc. were produced. Wooden apparatus for weaving of shawls and the spinner's wheels were in great demand. By 1823 there were 18,000 shops of shawl and about 1,00,000 spinners working in Kashmir.¹³⁰ This huge demand of the shawl industry was met by the woodwork industry. Even packing boxes for shawls were produced.

TOYS

Beautiful wooden toys were produced at Anantnag and Kulgam. It was a delight to handle the toys. These toys were known for their attractive finish and fascinating colours. Durability was one of their important characteristics. Very delicate wooden spoons and other household items were produced.

OTHER ITEMS

Other items of woodwork produced were furniture, legs for bedsteads, combs and musical instruments. Legs for bedsteads were in great demand in the Punjab. These were of various designs and worked on small lathes. Many times these were lacquered. There were a number of families who traditionally specialised in the production of musical instruments especially *sitar* — of different sizes and designs. Woodwork industry was in a prosperous condition and the state Government collected about Rs. 18,000 as poll tax¹³¹ at the time when Moorcroft visited Kashmir.

BOAT MAKING

Boat making had been an ancient industry in Kashmir. Kalhana mentions King Nara having built a town on river *Vitasta* (Jehlum) "...where the coming and going of ships (boats) gave splendour to the river¹³²." Boats are of many kinds. There are boats of all sizes, grain barges, which carried a cargo of thirty tons, *parindas* propelled by forty to fifty persons and light skiffs.¹³³ Present day houseboats floating over the sparkling waters of the Dal Lake have been introduced by Mr. Kennard.¹³⁴ In fact on his visit to Kashmir, Akbar expressed the disapproval of the boats prevalent then. He ordered double storeyed boats which could be used for residential purposes¹³⁵. So was constructed a floating city at Srinagar within no time.¹³⁶ According to *Ain-i-Akbari*, "In Kashmir, there was made a model of a ship that astonished every one who saw it¹³⁷." Thirty thousand boats plied in Kashmir.¹³⁸

Kashmir woodworker employs a unique skill in producing a boat. The wood used in boat making is *deodar* (cedar). They prefer using axe-cut wood to saw-cut wood. They use nails made out of mulberry wood. Iron nails are also used. Moorcraft was of the view that boat making craft of Kashmir was imperfect. On the other hand, Young Husband says, "if properly supervised and instructed, the Kashmiri should be capable of constructing any kind of craft¹³⁹." In any case a boat produced with the indigenous technique and skill has withstood the test of time.

Boat making industry contributed to the economy of Kashmir substantially. It gave employment to 33,870 boatmen in the last quarter of the 19th century. 2471¹⁴⁰ boats were used for commercial purposes and out of these boats, 1066¹⁴¹ were of large size. The industry employed large number of people. Boats were the principal means of transporting goods and grains from one place to another. Major towns of Kashmir valley were connected through river Jehlum over which these boats carried commercial traffic. The boat was the main hub of Kashmir's trade and commercial activity.

METAL ART WORKS

The metal art work of Kashmir excelled in the workmanship and created a name all over the world. The list of articles confiscated from the *Toshkhana* of Prince Sher Singh at Srinagar by Jamadar Khushal Singh contained, among other things, elegant utensils made of gold and silver.¹⁴² Their excellence is confirmed by the fact that some of the best pieces of such an art, still exist in the Albert and Victoria Museum, London.¹⁴³

Metal art works had received a boost after there was horizontal movement of skilled workers from one industry to another. The weapon industry had shown the signs of decline in the early part of the 19th century and as such the readjustment of the workers from this Industry to the metal works had taken place.

TYPE OF METAL WARE PRODUCED

They produced various type of wares. Chief of these were *aftabs*, *surais*, tumblers, trays, spitting pots and *hukkas*. Three types were made; enamelled with silver or copper base, copper or brass-ware with raised form engraving and engraved flower work. There were two other types — *Koftagari*¹⁴⁴ and *Ganga Jamni*¹⁴⁵. *Koftagari* was the inlaid work of steel and gold. In case of *Ganga Jamni*, gold and silver were together worked. The ground was of silver and the spring of leaves gilt in gold.

"The silver and gold work of which a great deal is made in Srinagar, is exceedingly effective, and the smith, with crudest tools consisting chisels and punches, contrives to copy with admirable fidelity, numerous designs both oriental and European¹⁴⁶."

The designs are generally either shawl patterns or the *chinar* leaf distinct from shawl pattern of the *Lhasa* style, representing motifs in Tibetan character.

ORNAMENTS

Silver smith also specialised in ornaments for the women. Ornament making has been the ancient craft of Kashmir. During the Mughal times, it got a boost because of Empress Nurjehan.¹⁴⁷ The Empress introduced many varieties of jewellery. Mughal influence is discernible from the beautiful ornaments like earrings, necklaces, bracelets, amulets, rosaries, rings and handbands, etc. Despite the Mughal influence, they retained their personality, perhaps due to their tradition of ornament making from the ancient times. The artisans worked with great patience till they produced a piece having its own individuality "...each piece is a model and has become as though possessed of a soul whilst long fashioned by human hands. All are carved, made or painted by men who really love and are proud of their work, men who are masters of their craft as though reluctant to part with it. Unlike the factory

hands who other than the pay-packet have little interest in that which they make, these men are artists, they do not dock in and dock out; often they will work far into the night, forgetful of the hour as they concentrate upon the piece which they are producing¹⁴⁸."

Silver smiths in Kashmir knew the art of giving peculiar sheen to silver by boiling the silver work in apricot juice. But it was 'apt to tarnish after a short time'¹⁴⁹."

COPPER WORK

In case of copper work, a new development at the end of the 19th century was that the artisans picked up the skill of imitating the Tibetan teapots and bowls and Yarkand and Kashgar vessels. Previously they worked in silver craft. The copper work had two types. One was the Tibetan type and the other local. The Tibetan type was a later development but the local type continued through out 19th century. The local type showed the impress of indigenous surroundings. Floral designs were lily, poppy, lotus or rose. Copper work of Kashmir is suitably adapted for electroplating.

FIREARMS

Work men of Kashmir have considerable reputation for the fabrication of gun and pistol barrels.¹⁵⁰ The method of manufacturing sword blades among Asiatics, perhaps is used with some modifications for the production of gun barrels. Moorcroft has with some detail, given the eye-witness account of such a method being used with the help of a forge indigenously constructed at the workshop of a workman. Wood charcoal is used as fuel. They have achieved mastery in this kind of manufacture on a small scale.

RAW MATERIAL USED

Iron available from the local source is of inferior quality. They procure Bajour iron by way of the Jhelum Valley Road. Even steel from Iran and Syria known as *foulad* is used.¹⁵¹ This iron is particularly used in the production of gun barrels. It costs half a *chilki* rupee per seer (roughly a kilo). But the rate of *foulad* is Rs. 16 *chilki* per seer.¹⁵² It is double than the cost of local iron. They manufacture swords and shields. According to Egerton¹⁵³, swords are beautifully designed. These designs are incised and men and animals figure in relief and outlines made of raised gold. Traditional shawl designs with motifs of sportsmen pursuing tigers and antepoles sitting on elephants or moving on foot are worked.

A SMALL COMMUNITY OF CRAFTSMEN DO IT

These workmen forming a small community of specialised craftsmen, were localised in a particular area of the city of Srinagar, near Hari Parbat Fort. There were about 30 workshops established in this area.¹⁵⁴ Though they were handicapped for want of resources and required technology, yet they demonstrated astonishing skill. "The well known gun smiths, Amira and Usmana, can turn out good guns and rifles and replace parts of weapons in so clever a manner that it is difficult to detect the difference between the Kashmiri and English workmanship¹⁵⁵."

VARIETY OF INSTRUMENTS PRODUCED

Gun barrels, pistols and swords apart, these workshops produced a variety of instruments.¹⁵⁶ "Excellent surgical instruments are made and many instruments now in use in the hospital are locally manufactured¹⁵⁷."

There did not exist any kind of systematic division of labour in those workshops. Four to five workmen worked in each workshop. The government paid them Rs. 30¹⁵⁸ *chilki* per rifle, but provided them all the materials. The payment, therefore, represented the wages and the profits.¹⁵⁹ There was one

more area in Beru *Tehsil*, Zainigram, where rifles and other small pieces were manufactured. About 25 workmen¹⁶⁰ worked in that workshop. The process of boring and rifling was the same as at Srinagar.¹⁶¹

DECLINE AND RISE

The fire arms industry, during the 19th century, was under decline. There was, of course, the period when it was prosperous. When Baron Hugal visited a workshop at Srinagar during the thirties of the 19th century, he felt disappointed. "...The appearance of the armourer himself was most venerable; he reminded me of the days of chivalry, when the trade he followed was so honoured in all lands... he prayed me to be seated and brought me several half finished muskets and pistols, an Indian match lock and some poignards, all elaborately ornamented. Nothing could be much worse than the implements he worked with."¹⁶²

The industry again started gaining momentum from the 70's of the century. The Government had closed the gun factory about this time. This factory supplied rifles to the state army. The work was then taken up by the private workshops. Consequently the industry received a big boost.

QUALITY OF ARTS AND CRAFTS DETERIORATE BY THE END OF 19TH CENTURY

On the whole, as the years passed towards the 20th century, the quality of arts and crafts went on deteriorating. It had many reasons. In Kashmir, especially at Srinagar, tradition had bound workmen of specialised crafts into various artisan communities. The Government had taken interest in these communities, precisely because their respective crafts gave them a lot of revenue. There was Government supervision over these arts and crafts. A Government officer ensured the good quality of raw material and also the quality of the articles produced. Due to the acute crisis in the shawl industry and the famine of 1878-79, there was lot of readjustment of these artisan communities cutting across their hereditary status in a particular craft they enjoyed. The Government also had to come forth with the tax reliefs and in fact, in certain cases abolishing the tax all together. Consequently there was relaxation in supervision. This led to the use of adulterated raw material and the production of bad work. The shawl weavers used the spurious wool bought from Amritsar and the silver smiths used alloy. "Copper work which sold at seven rupees per seer in the days of taxation, now sells at three rupees, and this is the case with many art wares"¹⁶³.

With the collapse of traditional artisan communities all and sundry took to any craft they liked. The Kashmiri was still conservative and would not like breaking from the past easily. The main demand for these crafts was from foreigners. They wanted cheap goods. A lot of competition developed among the producers of these crafts. Many shops came up, especially due to the absence of tax burdens from the Government. In order to capture the market, every one produced goods as cheap as possible. They cared least either for the quality of raw-material or a good piece of art. They had no traditional commitment. There is a common saying in Kashmiri; "*Yeli baj gao, teli barkat gae*" meaning prosperity went when taxation was lifted. It was in fact the taxation policy of the Government which ensured the good quality of art, even though the excessive taxation forced the artisan to give up the craft. A versatile genius, W.R. Lawrence, who settled the most complicated problem of rights on land and the share of Government revenue, had also a keen eye over the arts and crafts of Kashmir. He says, "Competition has lowered prices and the real masters of weaving, silver, papier-mache and copper work have to bend to the times and supply to the customers with cheap, inferior work."¹⁶⁴

One more predicament which the artisans of Kashmir faced was that their wages were linked with *shali*— the staple food in Kashmir. If it were not so, they could have purchased *shali* from the open market on natural prices and taken higher wages from their masters. But unfortunately it was not so. The shawl barons of Kashmir had exploited this situation to their advantage (as explained elsewhere).

In the new kind of situation, they were at the mercy of middlemen who always held them under debt. They advanced them money for food. The system affected a particular craft in two ways; one, the artisan was made a perpetual debtor, the other, the artisan delayed the work. Generally the things were not available from the ready stocks as that required huge finances. So the articles were made to order. The delay gave a bad name to the craft. These unbusiness like methods adversely affected the quality of the crafts. The middlemen were the brokers who were not dependable. They were more interested in their commission and not the reputation of the craft. W.R. Lawrence Calls a broker "an ultra-oriental rogue".

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1. Suraj Bhan	Rs. 1,90,000/-
2. Munshi Trilok Chand	Rs. 75,000/-
3. Himat Pandit Fotedar	Rs. 25,000/-
4. Pandit Kaul (Kawal) Bhan	Rs. 35,000/-
5. Shanker Pandit Kotru	Rs. 15,000/-
6. Sheikh Jalal-ud-Din (Resident of <i>Dag-Shal</i>)	Rs. 75,000/-
7. <i>Dawafaroshan</i> (Chemists)	Rs. 50,000/-
8. Pandit Chander Bhan (Keeper of records)	Rs. 25,000/-
9. <i>Qanungoes</i> of Pargana	Rs. 56,000/-
10. <i>Kardars</i> of Kanwar Sher Singh	Rs. 85,000/-
11. <i>Kardars</i> in general	Rs. 95,000/-

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147. Gervis, Pearce, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
148. *Ibid.*, p. 1591.
149. Lawrence, W.R., *op. cit.*, p. 378.
150. Moorcroft, William, *Travels*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*; p. 195.
151. Bates, Ellison, Charles, *Gazetteer*, Delhi, 1880; p. 14.
152. *Ibid.*
153. *Handbook of Indian Arms*, London, 1880, p. 14.
154. Bates, Ellison, *op. cit.*, 1880, p. 69.
155. Lawrence, W.R., *op. cit.*, pp. 372-73.
156. *Gulzar-i-Kashmir* has given a list of these instruments.
157. Lawrence, W.R., *op. cit.*, p. 372.
158. Bates, Ellison, Charles, *Gazetteer*, Delhi, 1880; p. 69.
159. *Ibid.*
160. *Ibid.*
161. The method is fully explained and illustrated in the *Hand book of Manufactures and Arts of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 288.
162. Hugal, Baron, *Kashmir and the Punjab*, Jammu, 1972; p. 121.
163. Lawrence W.R., *op. cit.*, p. 373.
164. *Ibid.*

Chapter IV

ODYSSEY OF THE SHAWL*

ANTIQUITY OF SHAWL

Surrounded by many a myth and legend, the story of shawl is very long and an ancient one. It reads like a romance; a fairy tale, an anonymous ballad sung to the children of Kashmir. To emphasize its antiquity, it is said that the shawl is as old as the hills of Kashmir. Some believe that it dates back four thousand years.¹ The excavation at Burzahom, on the bank of the Dal Lake, Srinagar, uncovers the earliest culture known in Kashmir. Carbon 14 dating tests of the remains of this culture show that it existed between 3492 and 4325 years ago. The articles found do not indicate that such a woollen fabric was produced then. At the same time, there is equally an important evidence available to show that the shawl belonged to very ancient times. As back as the 18th century B.C., the caravan trade carried on between Arabia Felix and Egypt, contained a Kashmiri shawl among its articles of trade.² Notwithstanding the authenticity of the source, deeper investigations and research could help in establishing the fact.

In our country, the shawl is associated with the *Ramayana*. It is said to have been given in dowry to Sita by her father Janaka.³ The gifts supplied to Northern India by Haimsvatas of Sabhaparvas of the *Mahabharata* which most probably included Kashmiris also included, among other things, smooth non-cotton textile pieces and woollen blankets.⁴ Such a view is strengthened by the tradition prevalent in Kashmir which says that Kurus presented ten thousand shawls to Pandavas. "Tradition has it that when Krishna went to the Kurus as a delegate from the Pandavas, the present of Dhritrashtra to him included ten thousand shawls of Kashmir⁵." Also it is believed that people of Kamboja brought clothes and skins as presents for Yudhishtira. Some of them were made of wool and embroidered with gold thread. The description matches with the shawls of Kashmir.⁶

The shawl being an article of trade with Egypt about 18th century B.C. almost coincides with Epic Age in India. It lends credence to its existence during that period. At the same time, the period of Burzahom culture also covers this period. This vital source does not provide any evidence to prove the fact. However, one limitation of Burzahom excavation is: its remains do not throw light on whole range of articles of common use, least of all the type of clothing they wore. Kashmir being a cold area, some kind of warm clothing must have been in use. We have subsequent evidence which shows that fine textiles were being produced in Kashmir. The excavation at Harwan unfolding Buddhist ruins belonging to the 4th century A.D., shows an advanced stage of development. The motifs on terracotta tiles found show women wearing transparent robes with delicate and sheen

* The entire history of the shawl has been brought together in this chapter. Hence it is a repetition to an extent.

scarves and horseman flying with scarves attached to his uniform.⁷ Much earlier we have an irrefutable evidence indicating that as back as 300 B.C., the Persian kings covered their pavilion in the battle field, with a Kashmiri shawl.⁸ "...a little after day break, a trumpet sounded and the image of the sun, cased in crystal and made of burnished gold, was raised on the top of kings pavilion, which was built of wood, covered with Kashmiri shawls and supported on silver poles". In *Our Oriental Heritage*, Will Durant also refers to the ancient glory of Kashmir textile craft. He records, "Directly at the northern tip of India, is the Province of Kashmir of whose very name recalls the ancient glory of India's textile craft¹⁰."

The woollen stuff which formed the article of caravan trade or is believed to have been given as a gift in dowry to Sita or presented by the Kurus to the Pandavas, could not be a sophisticated thing at that stage of development in Kashmir. However the wool being conspicuously soft and warm must have attracted attention for its demand from distant lands. It is not, therefore unlikely that the stuff existed and was very important during those times.

EVIDENCE FROM NILAMATA-PURAN & RAJTARANGINI

From Kashmir's own chronicles, *Nilamata-Purana* (6th and 7th century A.D.) and *Rajtarangini* (A.D. 1149-50), we find traces of evidence for its use in various ways. *Nilamata-Purana* gives guidance on various rituals to be followed on different religious functions. On one festival it says that *linga* should be given bath after removing its woollen covering¹¹ wrapped around it. *linga* is a symbol of Lord Siva, and was therefore, revered by Brahmins. Obviously the woollen covering could not be anything other than the soft and fine woollen texture (*pashmina*) produced by people in Kashmir.

Nilamata-Purana also provides us with a list of names of clothings which were used then. Among these, there is one named *Kambla*.¹² *Kambla* is the other name of *pravarna*, a woollen blanket. There is a mention of *pravarna* (*kambla*) in connection with the festival of first snowfall in *Nilamata-Purana*.¹³ *Pravarna* is the same thing as *Pravara* mentioned in *Mahabharata* being used for getting protection from cold.¹⁴ *Nilamata-Purana*, therefore, establishes a link between the *kambla* and *pravarna* of that period and *pravara* of *Mahabharata*'s time.

We have also references pointing to woollen stuff in Kalhana's chronicle. In a piece of advice¹⁵ given by Lalitaditya¹⁶ to his administration when he was engaged in his campaigns in the northern regions, he warned that villagers not be allowed to grow into *Damaras*. They should not be allowed spare food and oxen. Not even allowed to possess ornaments, houses, horses and woollen blankets which are supposed to be used only by urban people. It shows that woollen blankets were meant for the elite in the town and must have been something special.

HEUN TSANG BEARS IT OUT

Heun Tsang who visited Kashmir in A.D. 631, has mentioned about the nature of cloths used by the people of Kashmir. These were cotton, silk and *pashmina*. The garments were of *Kaiu-she-Ye* (*Kansheya*) and of cotton. *Kaiu-she-Ye* is the product of wild silkworm. They wore garments of *Tso-mo* (*Kshaumo*) sort of hem, *kien-po-lo* (*Kambla*), woven from fine goat hair, *Ho-la-li* (*karala*), the stuff made of fine hair of wild animals and is seldom woven. It is very valuable and is regarded superb. *Karala* is nothing but *pashmina*.¹⁷ Heun Tsang has seen clothes of cotton, silk and *pashmina*, worn by Kashmiris. He has even confirmed the use of *kambla* in the valley. This authenticates the versions given by *Nilamata-Purana* and Kalhana's chronicle. It is no wonder, therefore, if in his study of Indian Economics, Pramathanath Banerji has quoted from Martin's *Indian Empire*: "gossamer muslins of Dacca, the beautiful shawls of Kashmir adorned the proudest beauties at the courts of Caesars when the barbarians of Britain were painted savages¹⁸." Pearce Gervis referring to a book on Roman Empire says

says that Emperor Nero presented a Kashmir shawl to a famous Grecian athletic youth who had excelled in colossium. "...a fabulous shawl of many colours, which in the years it had taken in creating, stole from the skies, the hills, the lakes and the fields some of the wondrous colours from the top most parts of India¹⁹."

The shawl is not the product of modern times. Its antiquity is evident. Even the Biblical characters are found clad with the shawl from Babylonia, the silks from Ruth, the mantles from Tamar and shawls produced from the precious wool of the sheep of Kashmir.²⁰

THE SHAWL LOST AND FOUND AGAIN

For about four centuries (approximately between 8th and 12th century B.C.) the shawl, whatever its form, appears to have been lost. Though the woollens could not be expected to go out of production in Kashmir because of its severe winters but the type of wool required to produce this delicate stuff might have become difficult to procure. The closing of routes as a matter of deliberate policy after the disturbed conditions which followed Karkuta Rule in Kashmir must have contributed to the loss of its foreign markets their and the source of raw material. To the kings being involved in civil wars, this serious lapse could not have escaped notice.

After a long period of its oblivion the shawl appears to have been established once again just before 13th century.²¹ It was sent as a present²² to Chinese emperor by Mohammed Tughluk. Sultan Qutub-Ud-Din of Kashmir (A.D. 1373-89) encouraged its production after the interest taken by Mir Sayed Ali Hamdani on his second visit to Kashmir. It was brought up and groomed by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. The shawls were then produced on a large scale and exported. Its large production necessitated their stocking and storing in huge quantities. Under Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, one Malik Lodni Lond was imprisoned for having stolen 40,000 ass loads of shawls from the state stores.²³

The flourishing condition of this 'legendary gift', received another set-back due to the fratricidal wars fought among the sons and grandsons of Zain-ul-Abidin and various clans of Muslim nobility. It was left to the responsibility of an alien, Mirza Haider Dughlat to restore the shawl to its glory. He introduced new patterns which made it very popular.

WHERE DOES SHAWL BELONG TO, KASHMIR OR CENTRAL ASIA

A very pertinent question which deserves thorough investigation is whether the origin of shawl belongs to Kashmir or Central Asia. Moorcroft who has made a detailed study of the shawl industry in Kashmir, writes, "The wool was formerly supplied almost exclusively by the western provinces of Lhasa and Ladakh; but of late considerable quantities have been procured from the neighbourhood of Yarkand, Khoten and the families of the Great *Kirghis* horde. It is brought chiefly by Mogol merchants who exchange it for manufactured shawl goods in Kashmir, which they disposed of advantageously in Russia²⁴."

It is indeed, an irony that Kashmir having learnt the art of shawl weaving from Central Asia during medieval times, should export it to this very area against the raw material from Yarkand and Khoten which it (Kashmir) exclusively imported formerly from the Western provinces of Tibet. It is most probable that during ancient times when Kashmir produced *pashmina* (*Ho-La-Li*²⁵), the shawl must have gone from Kashmir to central Asia over the famous caravan route. "...A caravan route was also opened between Babylon and India via Bokhara or Balkh and Samarkand²⁶." It was the time when Wandering Bedouins carried the trade between the Euphrates and the Nile and countries like Egypt, Babylonia and India knew each other only by the products they produced. The Mogol merchants, about whom the reference has been made by Moorcroft, might have been following the ancient tradition of exchanging the raw material for the woven stuff of *pashmina*.

AKBAR TAKES PERSONAL INTEREST IN SHAWL

Mughals were the lovers of art and culture and they helped the artisans of Kashmir to give expression to their artistic instinct. Akbar took personal interest in improving the quality and texture of the shawl. He labelled it with the name of *Param Naram*. He was also instrumental in introducing the fashion of wearing two shawls instead of one. The Mughal nobility adopted the new fashion and the production of shawls was doubled. Mughals also introduced the new design, *Jigha* (explained elsewhere in this work). This design became a craze with the Mughal nobility. The design was adopted even in Iran. During the time of Akbar alone, there were two thousand *karkhanas*. At the end of the Mughal period there existed four thousand looms.

SHAWL FEVER GRIPS EUROPE

The momentum which the shawl industry received under the Mughals, partly continued during Afgan times. Afgan rule in Kashmir was more guided by revenue considerations than anything else. They taxed the shawl very heavily. It was the perseverance and the skill of the weavers which kept the industry alive. They introduced new designs which made shawl very popular in France and other countries of Europe. The patronage which the shawl received from Empress Josephine gave it a tremendous boost. To possess a shawl became a woman's dream. This magic gift from Kashmir appeared in dozens of pictures of women over that period from Ingres's Grand Society portraits to humble advertising posters.²⁷ Writing a letter to his lady love, Eliza in A.D. 1769, the English novelist, Laurence Sterne wrote, "I kiss your picture, your shawl and every trinket I exchanged with you ... I dreamt ... that there comest into the room, with a shawl in the hand ... you folded the shawl about my waist, and, kneeling, supplicated my attention²⁸." The shawl fever gripped the European ladies so much so 'that well established fashion, *silhouette* got replaced and the years upto 1870's came to be known as the shawl period²⁹."

IMITATION OF SHAWL PRESENTS A CHALLENGE

What followed the wave of popularity for the shawl in Europe, was a tornado of jealousy in European business circles, especially in England and France. They could not put up with the heavy demand for the shawl and the high price it fetched. They conspired to manufacture an imitation of this delicate stuff. It started in Edinburgh in 1877³⁰ followed by Scottish towns. The final blow came from Lyles (France) and Paisley (Great Britain) - in about A.D. 1800³¹. It was a Scotsman, Kerr, who started it in Paisley.³² With the help of Jacquard contraption³³ technology at Lyles, they produced excellent imitations from Australian and Persian wool. Kashmir pine was adopted as the motif for design on the Paisley shawls. Paisley produced the shawls on such a large scale that it wiped out all other competitors in the European market. It tantamounted to expropriating the skill of Kashmiri artisans by dishonest means. There existed no intellectual property rights or the law of patents at that time. British and French colonialists ruled over the world.

The Paisley shawl did have an adverse impact in European market but it was not before too long that it dawned on the buyers that they were purchasing only an imitation of Kashmir shawl. It was more in demand among the middleclass section of the society who, otherwise, also could not afford the highly priced shawls from Kashmir. European aristocracy continued to enjoy this luxury with unabated lust for it. So the delicate stuff from Kashmir continued to be supplied to Europe. The number of looms engaged and the weavers employed in A.D. 1800 and beyond shows that the production of shawls enhanced beyond expectations as is clear from the table on the next page.³⁴

Year	Dukans (Looms)	No. of Weavers	Remarks
A.D. 1800	1,800	54,000	3 weavers per loom
A.D. 1809	1,600	48,000	
A.D. 1813	2,400	72,000	

The largest number of looms were engaged in A.D. 1813.

FAMINE AND EPIDEMIC GIVE THE SERIOUS SETBACK

The famine of 1819 gave a setback to the industry. It was also the year when Sikhs had taken over Kashmir from Afgans. The Sikhs surpassed the Afgans in taxing the shawl industry heavily. The revenue collected from the shawl trade as a whole was more than the land revenue.³⁵ Since the Sikhs earned a fat revenue from the industry, they wanted to strengthen it. But due to the cholera epidemic and the devastating famine in A.D. 1833, shawl weavers were forced to leave Kashmir; a large number lost their lives. The number of looms fell to 2,000 mark and weavers to mere 6,000 in 1834.³⁶ With the onset of Dogra rule, the shawl industry picked up again. The number of workers engaged in the trade rose to 17,000 by A.D. 1847. Between A.D. 1846 and A.D. 1872, it gave employment to about 40,000 weavers alone. The British Resident in Kashmir (1871) gives the following break-up of weavers engaged at that time.³⁷

Weavers engaged in making long and square shawls	=	16,000
Weavers engaged in making striped and flowered pieces	=	5,000
Weavers engaged in making miscellaneous articles	=	3,000
Total	=	<u>24,000</u>

FRANCO-GERMAN WAR BRINGS THE COLLAPSE

The disaster for the shawl industry which was slowly brewing up in the shape of Franco-German war in A.D. 1870, brought total collapse of the industry by A.D. 1872. France, a defeated country, could not afford trading in luxury goods. They had to pay large indemnity costs to Germany. The boom in the shawl industry collapsed and tumbling came the edifice which had established great name and fame for this product from Kashmir.

RAW MATERIAL

Deep in the Himalayas, beyond the higher reaches of Western Tibet and Central Asia dwell the caprahircus, a version of a shawl goat. During winter months they grow flossy short under-wool over their underbelly, below the layers of normal long and coarse wool. This under fleece protects them from the severe cold. Such flossy and short underwool is called *keli-phumb*. Horizontally, this type of wool is of two types. One is of the domestic goat, the other of the wild goat. The wool yielded by the domestic goat is called *pashm* and that of the wild goat *asli tus*.³⁸ During spring time, the wild goat tries to free itself of the extra layer of insulation by rubbing against the bushes and rocks. The local people collect this wool for sale. In case of domestic goat the shearing takes place twice a year—spring and autumn. Autumn wool is better, both in quality and quantity. The wool shed by wild goats on bushes and rocks appears as if it is grown on plants like cotton.³⁹ Foreign travellers, generally, carry this impression. The *keli-phumb* is yielded by both the he-goat and she-goat; *rabo'* and *rama'* as the Tibetans call them. They call white and brown *pashm*, *lena-kapo* and *lena nakpo*. The goat is generally of two colours. If it bears white colour the *pashm* is white. If it is black, the *pashm* is black. If it is of

any other colour its is light and is known *Khudrang*.⁴⁰ The variety of wool changes from area to area. The finest wool comes from Chanthang and Turfan. "The *pashm* of Turfan is from goats in the Tien-Shan mountains and the principal marts of collection are Turfan and Uch-Turfan⁴¹." It was transported via the Kashgar-Yarkand-Leh caravan route.

Traditionally the wool imported by Kashmir used to come from the Western Provinces of Lhasa and Ladakh. Later it came also from areas nearer Yarkand and Khoten. According to Moorcroft the import of shawl wool by Kashmir was regulated by ancient custom and engagements.⁴² But it became a binding on Ladakh authorities to export shawl wool to Kashmir after the conclusion of the Tibetan-Ladakh-Mughal war in 1681-83. In fact during the Mughal times, it was the Mughal chief who acted as an agent between Kashmir and other countries for collection of *pashm* and also getting the shawls woven in Kashmir for export to other countries⁴³. During the time of Moorcroft, the import within Kashmir, "fluctuated from 500 horse loads to 1,000 horse-loads⁴⁴." The whole quantity of *asli-tus* did not exceed 1200⁴⁵ lbs. The shawl wool was collected by Arguns⁴⁶ from Tibet and Ladakh and by Mongol merchants near Yarkand and Khoten and families of Kirghis horde⁴⁷. G.T. Vigne who visited Kashmir fifteen years after Moorcroft says, "The *pashm* is brought to Ladakh upon the backs of sheep of a breed, larger than any I ever saw... One of these is loaded with from four to six *trak* of *pashm*, and will travel, about eight or nine miles a day. They cost two rupis each⁴⁸."

From this stage onwards the *pashm* is handled by nineteen specialists⁴⁹ at least. The *baqal-i-tibet* (the merchant) would be the wholesaler of the wool. He manages to get the wool from the source. There were 100 *baqal-i-tibets*⁵⁰. The cost of shawl wool was between Rs. 25 and Rs. 40 per *trak* (4 *seers*) in 1823.⁵¹ In 1835 it was about Rs. 24 for the white shawl wool. Earlier between A.D. 1794 to A.D. 1807, it was Rs. 16 to Rs. 25.⁵² The wool was carried from Leh to Srinagar on ponies. The charges for each horse-load were Rs. 33 average.⁵⁴ Total custom charges, at various places, were Rs. 95.⁵⁵

RATE OF PASHM

According to G.T. Vigne, the merchants purchased the *pashm* at Leh. The rate was fixed per *pul* (perhandful). Eighty *puls* fetched a small rupee.⁵⁶ The wool was cleaned on the spot itself and one-fourth of the total wool would be fit for the weaver to produce a shawl. According to Vigne, this cleaned up wool was carried on the backs of coolies right upto Kashmir.⁵⁷ Each coolie carried ten *traks* equal to one *maund* of load. They would be paid at one rupee a *trak*⁵⁸ for such a long and tedious journey over rugged and snowy mountain paths. At Srinagar the wool would be taken in his possession by the Governor. After adding 20% profit, he would release the wool to the merchant.⁵⁹ The practice, according to G.T. Vigne, could have been applicable only to that wool which was cleaned up on the spot. The bulk of wool was not cleaned up on the spot and was carried as such to Kashmir where the process of cleaning was done by women.

WHOLESALE, RETAILERS AND SPINNERS

From *baqal-i-tibet*, the wool would be sold to the retailer - the *pashm farosh*. He would retail it to the spinners. The number of such retailers was 75.⁶⁰ The terms between the merchant and the retailer were settled by the *mukeem*. For his services, he would charge a commission of three annas (1/16 of a rupee) per *trak*.⁶¹ The retailer would make cash payment. He had also the facility of two three months of credit on three to four % rate of interest.⁶² The spinners were the women of Kashmir⁶³ who were traditionally involved in spinning from ancient times. They sat and sang songs with the buzzing of the wheel, sometimes, till late in the moonlit night. They would sing in praise of the wheel and the myth and tradition of Kashmir. The girls would begin spinning at the age of ten.⁶⁴ A hundred thousand females were occupied in the trade according to Moorcroft.

One had only to note these women adding their delicate touch to this wool. First of all they picked out the kemp or coarse rough hair from the wool. Then they cleaned it of dust and unwanted materials. Finally they separated it from the inferior wool - *phiri*. No soap was used. Instead fine rice flour prepared after a complicated process was used to ensure that the wool "retains its softness and does not entirely remove all the natural oil⁶⁵."

The fine white wool was sold to the spinners by the retailers at the rate of 4 *tangas*⁶⁶ a *pal*⁶⁷ and inferior wool at 2 to 3 *tangas* per⁶⁸ *pal* (near about three lbs). There were 75 retailers in the city of Srinagar in 1823.⁶⁹

The spinners, after producing the yarn sold it to the *tar-furosh* (yarn-seller) or *paivone*. The total number of yarn-sellers in the city of Srinagar during 1923 was about 100.⁷⁰ The yarn of the fine wool was sold by two methods—weight and measure. A weight of one *pal* would fetch twelve annas⁷¹ to one rupee and four annas, depending on the market. The method of selling by measure would fetch seven *tangas*⁷² (about seven pence) for doubled, hundred lengths of yarn, divided into parts of three *gaz* (yards) and a half. The price would be paid for each length of three and a half *gaz*. The yarn from *phiri* (the seconds wool) was sold by measure. A hundred yards of twisted yarn from *phiri* and each part of twenty four *girah* would fetch about half three *pice* (about three half pence). Moorcroft is of the view that in general an industrious spinner⁷³ earned about one rupee and eight annas⁷⁴ per month after deducting the cost of wool. The earning of *tar-farosh* was about one paisa to half an anna in a rupee.⁷⁵

After purchasing the yarn from the spinners, the yarn seller, sold the yarn to the needy weavers. He sold it at a profit of one *pice* to a *tanga* (an anna) in a rupee.⁷⁶

OTHER SPECIALISTS

The weaver after settling the design and the colour with the owner who invested in the trade, approached the expert who knew how to divide the yarn into skeins. The weaver then made over each skein to *rung-rez* (the dyer). The yarn was then dyed in different hues by the *rung-rez*. He has forty kinds of them.⁷⁷ "Their blues and purples are made chiefly from indigo; yellow from a Punjabi flower called *gul-i-kysu*, and from a grass called *woftangil* in Kashmir; their blacks are procured from iron filing and wild pomegranate skins, from which also a light brown is obtained; their reds from *kermes* and logwood and a native wood called *line*; a drab from 'walnut skins; and it will be scarcely believed that the finest of their greens, and light blue also are extracted from English green baize⁷⁸." During the Mughal times, the traditional dyers of Kashmir were able to produce about three hundred shades which were later reduced to seventy four in the Sikh period⁷⁹. Most of the dyes were imported.

The next specialist in the long process was the warp-maker (*nakatoo*). His function was to adjust the yarn for both warp and waft. The length of yarns so cut used to be three and a half *gaz*, double than the length of the waft. "The number of these lengths varies from two thousand to three thousand according to the closeness or openness or coarseness of the yarn⁸⁰." The yarn for the waft was thicker than the yarn used in the preparation of warp. Its weight was at least a half more than the warp. One *nakatoo* could prepare both warp and weft for two shawls in one day.⁸¹ The number of warp makers was about sixty in 1823.⁸² The yarn would then pass on to the warp dresser whose function was to add starch to the warp. He stretched the warp by means of sticks due to which threads could slightly get separated and then dipped in thick boiled rice starch. It was dried and brushed. The threads got a little stiffened and set apart. The number of warp dressers was sixty in 1823. They got four *paise* for a single thread⁸³ and its double for double threads. For preparing warp for the border of a shawl, silk was generally used.



Shah Tush Goat



This Jamwar Shawl of Shahtush is an excellent example of Sozni.

It can pass through a ring

Original from

THE PROCESS OF WEAVING

Again the warp passed on to the warp threaders (*beere gooroo*). Their function was to pass on the threads of the warp through needles. After this was done, the warp passed on to the weaver. The number of threaders was one hundred in 1823.⁸⁴ The technique of weaving a shawl followed the method prevalent in Iran and Central Asia⁸⁵.

When the warp was laid on the loom, the *naqash* who provided the pattern or the design, the *tarahguru*, the colour caller and the *taleem guru* who rendered the design into a script, sat together and settled the quantum of yarn and the number of colours to be used. On the basis of design provided by the *naqash*, the *tarahguru* started his work from the bottom upwards by calling out each colour, the number of warps required in various colours, till the whole design was completed. The design, thus, worked in colour is put in black and white in a sort of typical short-hand and then handed over to the weaver who started the weaving as per the script. The weavers, then, knotted the yarn of the needles (*tujis*) to the warp under the guidance of the *tarahguru*. The face of the cloth which worked up into a design was kept downward and to that side hung about four to fifteen hundred needles with the yarn of different colours. The number of needles was determined by the type of design involved. After the *ustad* (the master) was satisfied about the work, it continued, till the whole shawl was completed.

SHAWL CLOTH

Shawl cloth is of two types. One is plain and made of two threads. This is known as *alwan*. The other is 'twilled' and of four threads. The first type was common earlier. From the second type, that is twilled, were made the shawls about twenty four *girahs* broad. These were woven by two weavers sitting on opposite ends and throwing the shuttle half way each side. The movement of the shuttle was done by hands, unlike a power loom or the loom run by a weaver's feet. When the shawl was completed on the loom, it was handed over to the *puruzgar*, who cleared the shawl of the knots, ends or hairs, if any. Any defects detected were mended by the *rafugar* (the darning). It was at this stage, the shawl was sent to the collector for the first time for stamping it for a duty of 26%.

After such a lengthy process, the shawl found its way to the *wafrosh*. He was the person who had already paid advance to the manufacturer for effecting its sale to the merchant. Their terms with regard to the price of the shawl were fixed by a *mukeem* (the broker).

SPECIAL WASHING

The shawls were then sent for a wash. Great care was taken in washing this delicate stuff. Washing was done in cold water. The best water for washing of the shawl "is found in the canal, between the lake and the flood-gates of Drugjen... it communicates to the shawl a softness which cannot be given to those manufactured at any place in the plains of Hindustan⁸⁶." The soap was used sparingly in those parts which were without embroidery. The white shawls were bleached in open air and were given the fumes of sulphur to improve their whiteness. The coloured shawls were dried under shade. Then the process of calendering took place with the help of wooden cylinder in two parts. It was tightly wrapped round this cylinder and kept like that at least for two days.

Many ready-made garments were made from the plain shawl cloth - *alwan*. The cloth was used by the ladies of rich families for gowns (*ferans*). One thread plain shawl cloth was especially manufactured for the turbans of Sikhs.⁸⁷ The *alwan* could be printed, netted or embroidered for preparing various types of garments.

KANI AND AMLIKAR SHAWL

Basically the shawl has two types. The *Kani-Shawl* and *Amlikar Shawl*. The *Kani-Shawl* is traditional

one and is woven along with its design on the loom itself. It uses the method by which small figments of woven shawl are sewn together so neatly that the joints cannot be detected. This is done by darners. These shawls were very expensive; they involved lot of labour and time. As explained, such shawls required the services of many specialists, like *naqash*, *tarahguru* (colour caller) and *talimguru* (pattern master) etc. Only an intelligent weaver could translate the script of the design into a reality.

The *amlkar-shawl* is a piece of *pashmina* of a standard length and breadth over which beautiful designs of embroidery are worked out in fascinating colours. In fact it is an excellent display in the art of embroidery. Embroideries have been known in history from ancient times. The earliest surviving embroideries belonged to Scythians as back as the 3rd and 5th centuries B.C.⁸⁸ Greeks dressed in embroideries have been depicted on vases belonging to 6th and 7th centuries (B.C.).⁸⁹ Embroidery belonging to the Tang dynasty have been excavated in China.⁹⁰ The art is very old in India. "Embroidery is an ancient art of our country. It is found at Ajanta... The Kashmere embroidery on wool is of historical and universal fame and the delicacy and deftness of Kashmere craftsmen in this line are yet unrivalled any where in the world⁹¹."

The outline of the design is transcribed over the *pashmina* cloth by a set procedure. First a piece of transparent paper is pinned over the pattern of design to be transcribed. The out-lines on the transparent paper are drawn by a charcoal stick and the traced outlines are pricked with a pin to create holes. When this is done the *pashmina* cloth is smoothed with a unique method. The transparent paper having holes along the outlines of the design is fixed over the piece of *pashmina* cloth. Some kind of coloured powder or chalk powder is passed over the outlines of the design created by holes. The design is, thus, transcribed to the *pashmina* cloth. In a more sophisticated procedure, the coloured powder is "rendered tenacious by mucilage of gum arabic, which when work is completed is readily detached in dust by the hand⁹²."

The *amlkar-shawl* took its birth during the time of Afgans in Kashmir, when one master-craftsman, Ala Baba, got inspired for a coloured embroidery design on a shawl from the dirty footprints of a fowl on a piece of white cloth. These shawls became very popular because of their attractive designs. Such shawls were exempted from stamp duty. Ala Baba was the man who produced this type of shawl at one-third cost of the *kani-shawl*. Due to the increased demand for the shawl the number of darners increased to 5000 from 2000 persons.⁹³

TYPES OF SHAWLS

Apart from *kani* and *amlkar* shawls, other kinds of shawls and articles of common use were made of *pashmina* cloth. Among them were also *dushawls*—shawls in pairs. These shawls had a variety and were branded under different names according to their quality, Colour and design. These brands were many and varied.⁹⁴ Shawls were also classified on the basis of pattern of design and named as *pala*, *hashia*, *zanjir*, *dhour*, etc. A *jamawar* shawl was a speciality. Such shawls were made by a weaver all alone. 'Jigha' design could always be found interlaced with stripes of various colours covered with small flowers.⁹⁵ Moorcroft paid tribute to this kind of shawl by calling it "a grown piece". It had a variety. One variety was called *khirkhabutha*. It had 'large compound flowers, consisting of groups of smaller ones.' Such a variety was generally used by Persians and Afgans. There are other things made of shawl stuff.⁹⁶

SHAWL BECOMES FAMOUS IN THE WEST

Not only for its softest and warm wool, but also for its colour patterns, especially in embroidery, the shawl had created a great name all over the world. From the day a Kashmiri shawl was presented to his beloved, Josephine, by Napoleon who had received it as a gift from Khidive in Egypt, it became a

point of prestige for the aristocratic ladies in France to possess one at any cost. Its fame spread like wild fire in Europe 'To own a shawl became every woman's dream.' "Many artistic ladies who formed part of the imperial couple's wedding procession in 1810, had a Kashmir shawl carefully folded over one arm as they progressed through the great gallery of Louvre".⁹⁷

DESIGNS INSPIRED BY ENVIRONMENT

The beautiful designs in embroidery were a product of inspiration which the craftsmen got from the environment in which they lived. They lived in the lap of nature where in a span of one year they came across a multitude of flowers which suited every mood. Birds had a variety and changed from season to season. Some of the rare shawls in the Prince of Wales collections were found with interesting designs. One depicted the map of Srinagar with streets and houses, gardens and temples along with people walking around and the boats on the deep blue river. The other one sober coloured with an embroidery design showing, "Conventional Persian and Cashmere wilderness of flowers with birds of the loudest plumage, singing in the bloom and wonderful animals, stalking round and wandering men".⁹⁸

During the Sikh period, there developed, the fashion of covering the whole foundation of a shawl with a flower design prepared in needle work. Shawls would also depict romances of Indo-Persian literature⁹⁹. Also battle scenes along with Persian couplets were designed.¹⁰⁰ A shawl depicting the scenes of Sikh battles and their victories over their Afgan rivals, was got prepared by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.¹⁰¹

SHAWL GAVE LARGER REVENUE THAN LAND REVENUE

Besides creating a sensation for its beauty and softness, the shawl had become a backbone of Kashmir's economy. "A much larger revenue than that which is obtained from land is realized from the shawl manufacture".¹⁰² During Moorcroft's time the total value of shawl goods manufactured was about thirty five lacs per annum¹⁰³, though it declined later due to various reasons, including natural calamities. Earlier, there was huge demand for shawls of Kashmir from Turkey, Afganistan, Persia and Chinese Turkistan. Even Uzbeks and Armenians traded in Kashmir shawls.

CAUSES OF DECLINE

Subsequently certain political factors affected the trade adversely with Persia and Turkey. Within the Indian subcontinent the replacement of Mughal Court by British Rule, decreased the demand for shawls. Costly shawls formed an important article of attire of the nobility in Indian courts. Despite such dampening factors, the industry continued beyond A.D. 1800. As already explained elsewhere, the number of looms increased from 18,000 in A.D. 1800 to 24,000 in A.D. 1813, employing about 72,000 weavers.¹⁰⁴ The number of weavers was reduced to only 24,000 in A.D. 1823¹⁰⁵ mainly due to the famine of 1819 and also the disturbed political conditions. Between A.D. 1820 and 1821 about 10,000 looms had to be vacated¹⁰⁶ which meant about 30,000 weavers being thrown out of employment. But still the number of weavers which continued to be employed on looms were about 30,000 to 40,000 between 1846 to 1872.¹⁰⁷

EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL

Despite many ups and downs, the shawl industry continued to play a major role in the economic dispensation of Kashmir. The industry did not give employment to weavers alone. There were about 19 specialist groups involved in the process, till the shawl appeared in finished condition. About 1,27,476 workers were directly or indirectly engaged in the shawl industry.¹⁰⁸ The number of darners alone was 5,000.¹⁰⁹ The spinning of the wool was done almost in every household in the city of Srinagar and

other areas. The number of spinners during the time of Moorcroft was 1,00,000.¹¹⁰ Domesticating of shawl goat and the collection of shawl wool shed by the wild goats and its transportation to Srinagar was itself a massive operation involving thousands of people. The marketing of the wool and finished goods was a special branch of the industry. Hundreds of people were engaged in this process.

ESTIMATED VALUE OF TRADE

The value of shawl trade estimated between 1871 and 1874 was about Company's 15,00,000 rupees.¹¹¹ This was the time when the Franco-German war had already made an impact. Four-fifths of this amount represented long *doshala* and square shawls. The rest represented striped and embroidered fabrics, meant for Afgan and Persian markets. The value of other items, say cloaks, stockings, fringes, curtains and girdles amounted to 60,000 to 80,000 of Company's rupees.¹¹²

TYPE OF ORGANISATION

The entrepreneurial set-up of the industry was headed by the investor who was generally the master craftsman (*ustad*) initially. Later during Sikh times, he was replaced by the *karkhandar* who was not a master craftsman himself. He only invested money and organised the *karkhana*. Henceforth, the industry appears to have entered the mode of capitalistic form of production. While previously the mastercraftsman used to be the owner himself, in the new set-up, he was reduced to the position of a wage-earner.

In the system, as it existed, brokers played an important role. The brokers were of two kinds; those who settled the terms between the wholesalers and the retailers of the raw material and those who arranged the marketing of the finished product. They were known as *mukeem* and *wafarosh* respectively. *Wafarosh* advanced money to the *karkhandar* or to the *ustad* on six to eight % of interest¹¹³ and booked the product. He maintained contact with merchants in markets outside Kashmir like Persia, Afganistan, Central Asian cities and various trade centres in the Indian subcontinent. Subsequently he also maintained contacts with European countries. These brokers made profits by way of earning huge commission.

IMPORTANCE OF THE INDUSTRY

The entire functioning of the shawl industry, right from the collection of wool from the bushes and other sources, till the finished product reached the customer, generated tremendous economic activity, so much so that this industry became an inseparable part of the economic and cultural ethos of Kashmir. Almost all the households in the city of Srinagar and other areas were fully or partly, directly or indirectly, involved in this industry and derived some kind of economic advantage. For running the Government the shawl industry contributed a major portion to the State revenue. Kashmir peasantry had to suffer for sustaining the *shal-bafs* by selling food on cheaper rates.

TAXES AND DUTIES

The shawl industry, no doubt, was a substantial source of revenue to Government but unfortunately the Government went beyond limits in taxing the industry. The rates of duties and taxes differed under different rulers. They charged both import duty on the raw wool and export duty on the finished product. Sometimes the poll tax was charged from the weavers and sometimes on looms. Subsequently the State collected the shawls from the loom and marked it after deducting the taxes leaving the balance for the owner of the shawl.

During the Sikh rule, the tax levied on shawls totalled about Rs. 12 lakh.¹¹⁴ A collector (*kardar*) was assigned the duty of collecting the taxes. He would send his agents to the workshops almost every

day to check if a few inches of the shawl had been woven on the loom. He would direct the *karkhandar* (owner) to present this piece of shawl to a sort of tribunal constituted of experts, in the presence of shawl dealers. The value of the shawl would then be assessed. Accordingly the shawl would be stamped and charged the stamp duty. This duty was 25% of the value assessed¹¹⁵. During the time of Dogras the stamp duty was 40%.¹¹⁶ It was again reduced to 26% during 1870-72¹¹⁷. The collector had to send a twelfth of these collections to Lahore every month and the owner of the shawl had to pay one quarter of its value at the time of assessment. Rs. 4 as permit duty would be again levied when exported from Kashmir.¹¹⁸ It would be once more taxed. The Sikhs charged Rs. 120 per shop per year.¹¹⁹

An annual tax of Rs. 48 on each *shal-baf* (weaver) was charged from the *karkhandars* before 1867 but was reduced to Rs. 37 after this year.¹²⁰ Not only the shawls, the *shal-bafs*, the looms and the *karkhandars* were taxed but also a custom duty of Rs. 95 per horse-load was charged on the shawl wool imported from the Himalayan regions and Central Asia.¹²¹ The Government receipts from the Department of Shawls were upto the tune of Rs. 60,00,000 in A.D. 1871-72 which fell to Rs. 30,000 in the year 1879¹²² due to the disaster caused by the Franco-German war and the devastating famine in the year 1878-79. The crisis was, to some extent, averted by various remedial measures taken by Maharaja Ranbir Singh. The receipts from the Shawl Department increased to Rs. 91,000 - a very small figure in comparison to the receipts in the year 1871-72.

UNFAIR DEAL WITH THE MAN BEHIND THE CRAFT

The tragedy which beset this pride industry due to the Franco-German war, no doubt, gave it a severe blow, but the causes for its decay were manifold. The principal cause was the treatment given to the man behind this industry. Despite the fact that nature had gifted the artisans with the artistic instinct and the patience to produce such an article as the shawl, he was all along exploited by the governments and the *karkhandars*. When the mastercraftsman was himself the owner of the loom, the *shal-bafs* were better off. But when the industry grew up and showed more profits with increased turn-overs, the *karkhandars* and the autocratic governments, aimed at more and more profits and taxes respectively, leaving behind not even the bare subsistence for the weavers.

WAGES

A first-rate shawl-weaver earned one small rupee¹²³ as his wage per day. This was equal to 10 to 12 shillings. A less skilled worker earned only half a rupee a day.¹²⁴ In fact the earnings of a weaver in A.D. 1823 were one anna¹²⁵ and increased to two annas in 1835 and then to annas 6 maximum at the end of Sikh rule.¹²⁶ W.R. Lawrence puts the wage of a shawl weaver one or two annas per diem during 1871.¹²⁷ On the other hand, according to Charles Ellison Bates (A.D. 1879) a first rate weaver earned 4 to 5 pence a day.¹²⁸ A part of this wage, they would be forced to take in rice at a rate higher than prevalent in market. The earnings of the weavers were still on the lower side after the Franco-German war.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The economic condition of the weavers contrasted with the beautiful masterpieces of art which they produced. They worked in small, unventilated and dilapidated rooms from dawn to dusk with their backs bent and eyes concentrated on the design they wove on the loom or worked with a needle. Because of the unhygienic conditions, lack of nourishment and overwork, they suffered from chest infection, rheumatism and scrofula¹²⁹. Their *ustad* or *karkhandar* would lend them money on marriages and other social functions, which they were never able to repay. And then, he had to be his bonded

labourer throughout his life.

KARKHANDARS LEAD LUXURIOUS LIFE

The *karkhandars*, the brokers and the merchants, on the other hand, lived a luxurious life out of the fabulous profits they made from this trade. These people lived in palatial houses and maintained a large harem.¹³⁰ Some of them used milk instead of water in their *Hukas*.¹³¹ Some of them dabbled in politics and rubbed shoulders with the ruling nobility. They were loyal to the rulers and posed to be the leaders of the people. They betrayed them at crucial moments. They had organised their offices in the major cities and trading centres of the Indian subcontinent. The weavers were a desperate lot. They even rose in revolt against the government (in 1865).

Human factor could not be ignored if the industry required to face the challenges of natural calamities and the fall in foreign demand caused due to wars and competition from other sources. Had the government and the *karkhandars* looked after the interests of the weavers, they would have, perhaps, withstood all the pressures. The pressures were many and varied. Nature appeared hostile to them. When the industry was at its height, the famine of A.D. 1819 gave it a terrible blow. It was followed by a deadly cholera epidemic and devastating famine in A.D. 1833. Many thousand weavers perished¹³² and many more drove away to Amritsar and Lahore. Again thousands of people lost their lives when one more famine struck the valley in 1877-79. "...None suffered more heavily in that calamity than the poor weakly shawl weavers."¹³³

EXTRANEUS FACTORS LEAD TO THE FALL

The British colonial masters had felt jealous of this unique industry and wanted to transfer it to England.¹³⁴ William Moorcroft was actively working for his country. The East India Company also encouraged weavers from Kashmir to start the industry in Amritsar and other parts of British India. Even Raja Gulab Singh diverted the industry to Jammu. The Royal Indian Courts had also gone out of existence after the British rule and the Marhatta power had already fallen and the demand for Kashmir shawl had dwindled inside India. Outside the country, Paisley shawls had presented a severe competition. Trade with Persia and Turkey had reduced because of certain political developments. England had imposed tariff on the import of shawls.¹³⁵ At home, the government not satisfied with numerous taxes and other extortions assumed the monopoly of shawl wool and thereafter sold it to the manufacturer at a profit of twenty%. It was followed by monopolising the whole industry and exploiting it to the maximum possible extent. The final blow was struck in the Franco German war. The *shawl-bafs* were unable to withstand these pressures.

"The shawl industry is now, unfortunately a tradition, a memory of the past. The trade received its death blow when war broke out between Germany and France in A.D. 1870, and I have been told by an eye-witness of the intense excitement and interest with which the Kashmiri shawl weavers watched the fate of France in that great struggle—bursting into tears and loud lamentations when the news of Germany's victories reached them"¹³⁶.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS AROUND THE SHAWL

The shawl had become so much a part of Kashmir's life that many myths and legends had been woven around it. So many economic benefits flowed from the shawl manufacture, that the praises for the shawl formed the songs, sung by Kashmiris on marriages and other festivals. Kashmiri Pandits made spinning wheel a symbol of god Inder and named it after him. They revered and worshipped the wheel. Even *tilak* was applied on its every part. Non-possession of an Inder (spinning wheel) was considered a bad omen in a Kashmiri household. A festival *Pan* (named after the spun yarn of *pashmina*) is

celebrated by Kashmiri Pandits even at present. On this day they prepare *roth* (baked sweet bread) and present it as oblation to Inder (spinning wheel) and distribute it as a *prashad* (something with religious sanctity) to all the neighbours and close relatives. A virgin girl is made to spin the *pashm* thread on the spinning wheel and the product then worn by the eldest lady of the household. The parts of the spinning wheel were so named as to have religious connotation. The thread round the wheel connected with the spindle for the spinning process, was given the name of *Yona*—the sacred thread worn by a brahmin round his neck. The handle of the wheel was given the name of *chakra*. They revered the industry, apparently, because of the economic advantage they derived as employees of the *dagshwal* and also substantial returns to their ladies.

The popular Kashmiri tradition has it, that the most revered Kashmiri mystic and poet Lal Ded spun a large quantity of *pashmina* thread for twelve years during her early married life. One day her mother-in-law who did not like her ways, in a fit of fury dropped the entire quantity of the spun thread into the placid waters of the Dal Lake. That resulted in the presence of thread in *nadru* (*bein*), a reed in the Dal Lake which forms the lower part of the slender stem on which the large lotus appears to lie perilously perched in the shimmering waters of the Lake. Kashmiris use *nadru* as a cherished vegetable and cook it on important religious occasions like *Shivaratri* and *Id*. While working on the wheel, Kashmiri women hum a song:

*Bahan werian yeander kote Lalea,
Bahi wher tchunenus Hasi Dalas,
Tath kheat Nadere te pamposh Thale Thale,
Tithai kaen tothto mey Bale,
Yith kaen tothotyoke pomperech Lalea.*

For twelve years Lal Ded worked at the spinning wheel. Her mother-in-law dropped the entire spun thread into the Dal Lake. That resulted in the growth of *Nadru* and lotus in the lake. As you had taken *Lala* of Pampore under Your cover, kindly shower upon me the same Love.

Certain metaphors and sayings connected with the shawl became the part and parcel of folk lore of Kashmiris. They speak of the poor condition of the *shawl-bafs*, who were responsible for such a fantastic creation as *kani*, *amli* or *jamwar* shawl. For instance, the following saying is common among the women of the poorer sections of Kashmiri community:

*sini mohima sotsal,
rani mohima khandvave.*

If any vegetable cannot be had, one can still get mallows; if a husband cannot be had, one can still get a shawl weaver¹³⁷.

Similarly, if a lady from the common folk of Kashmir, has to curse a lady in the neighbourhood or otherwise, would say, "may you get a shawl weaver for a husband."¹³⁸

ODYSSEY COMES TO AN END

Odyssey of the Kashmiri shawl is a long tale of many smiles and tears. Born, as it was centuries ago, it made its beginning from the regions in Western Tibet, deep inside Himalayas and the Tien-Shan mountains in Central Asia, wherefrom its raw material was collected. Trudging its way over mountain peaks and zig-zag paths the *pasham* wool reached the valley of Kashmir. There it was cleaned and spun by the dexterous hands of the beautiful women of Kashmir and going through about nineteen

processes of various specialists including designers, found itself on the loom of weavers. After adding their blood and sweat for months, it was presented to the world community as a magic gift of Kashmir's cultural heritage. Then it found its place in the caravan trade from Arabia Felix to Egypt as far back as 1800 B.C. In the Indian subcontinent, as per the tradition, it was provided the honour of being presented as dowry gift to Sita. Persian kings felt elated in using it for covering their pavilions in the battlefield as far back as 300 B.C. Roman Emperor Nero awarded it to a Grecian athlete to honour him. It formed part of the costume of the Biblical characters and was given the privilege of adorning the proudest beauties in the court of Caesars.

It again found its way back to Central Asia over the caravan route. It was resurrected to life by the great Sultan *Badshah*. Akbar baptised it with the name of *Parm Narm*. Leonardo De Vinci made it part of his famous painting—*Mona Lisa* and Napoleon presented it to his beloved—Josephine. And, then, this 'Silky web of wool' became the 'indispensable item of an elegant wardrobe' of aristocratic ladies in France. Many hearts throbbed for it. But the man behind this wonder creation was awarded the self-inflicted punishment of cutting his limbs and blinding himself for getting rid of this trade. All were cruel to him — the nature, the *karkhandar* and the government.

THE EPITAPH

Now the shawl is dead! What is left, is only the tradition. If one were to write an epitaph for the shawl, it could be:

I was born, centuries ago. I lived, to stir the emotions of millions. I
died, unwept, unsung and for no fault of mine.

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4. Ved. Kumari, *op. cit.*, A Study, p. 129.
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8. Reade, Winwood, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
9. *Ibid.* This description relates to Darius III of Persia.
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42. Moorcroft, William, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 207.
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44. Moorcroft, William, MS. Eur. D. 264, p. 27.
45. Moorcroft, William, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 166.
46. *Arguns* were the off springs of Kashmir traders who married Ladhaki women and settled over there.
47. Moorcroft, William, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 166.
48. Vigne, G.T., *op. cit.*, p. 126 .
49. Moorcroft, William, MS Eur D. 264, p. 18. *op. cit.*,
50. *Tarikh-i-Kalan*, f. 77, *Ibid.*, p. 167. *op. cit.*,
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63. Some wool was spun by men, who were called *Tushkha*.
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 79. Sharma, Diwan Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
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 81. *Ibid.*
 82. Moorcroft, William, MS Eur. D. 264, p. 30. *op. cit.*,
 83. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
 84. Sharma, Diwan Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
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 87. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
 88. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 4, 15th Ed., Londo; p. 471.
 89. *Ibid.*
 90. *Ibid.*
 91. Swarup, Shanti, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
 92. Moorcroft, William, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 188.
 93. Sharma, Diwan Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 166.
 94. Moorcroft, William, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 188.
- (i) *Pattu Pashmina*: It was generally made of coarse *pashmina* cloth, some times also of *Asli Tus*. It was four 'gaz' in length and used as blanket. Its price was Rs. 5 to 6.
 - (ii) *Shala Phiri*: It was made of *pashmina* seconds. It was three and a half gaz to four gaz long and a half gaz broad. It cost Rs. 20 to 30 each.
 - (iii) *Halwan (Alwan)*: It was plain shawl cloth of fine variety. It was twelve *Girahs* in breadth and used in many wares of daily use including turbans. It cost Rs. 3 to 6 Per *Gaz*.
 - (iv) *Jawahar Shala Sada*: it was with narrow coloured border, three and a half 'gaz' or three and three quarters of a gaz long and half the length in breadth. It cost Rs. 50 to 60 per piece.
 - (v) *Shala Hashidar*: These shawls had single, double or four borders costing Rs. 60 to 70, Rs. 40 to 70, Rs. 60 to 70 respectively.
 - (vi) *Hashidar khosar or Khalil Khani*: It had two borders and two *kanga* and cost Rs. 40 to Rs. 50.
 - (vii) *Hashidar kiungridar*: Its speciality was that it had a design nearer centre of the wall of Asiatic forts with niches and match blocks. It had a normal boder and cost Rs. 100 to 150.
 - (viii) *Dhourdar*: This shawl had a design running all-round between the border and the field. It was costly. Rs. 200 to 2,200 a pair.
 - (ix) *Mathandar*: Its ornament was the moon at the middle and cost Rs. 300 to 1,800.
 - (x) *Chand dar*: Its ornament was also the moon at the middle and was named after this design. Cost Rs. 500 to 1,500 per pair.
 - (xi) *Chausahidar*: It had a design of four half-moons. Cost Rs. 300 to 1,500 per pair.
 - (xii) *Kunj bthadar*: It had a bunch of flowers at each corner and cost Rs. 200 to 900 per pair.

- (xiii) *Alifdar*: It had green springs on white ground as its design. Cost Rs. 120 to 1,150 per pair.
- (xiv) *Kaddar*: It was designed with cone-like flowers with ends pointing either straight or curved downwards.
- (xv) *Dokaddar*: Over this shawl was shown a design of cones at two different heights. Second row of cones was smaller being at a higher elevation. This shawl cost Rs. 100 to 800.
- 95. Lawrence, W.R., *op. cit.*, p. 376.
- 96. These things are *Kasabeh (Rumal)*, womens' veils and square shawls, these are in dimension either one and half gaz square or two and a half square. Besides there are *Shamlas* (girdle for waist), *Doshala*, *Goshpech* (turbans), *Mandila* with *Zanjir* or without it, *Kalin Pashmina*, *Naqash* trousers, *Charkhama*, *Gulbadam Lungi*, *Takins* (caps), *Jarab* (stockings), *Moza Pashmina* (long stockings), *Darparda* (curtains)', '*Kajjari*', *Asp* (saddle cloths). *Kajjri Fil* (elephants housing), *Balapos* (quilt cover), *Galaband* (cravat) *Pistanband*. (neckerchief), *Lingota* (waist belts), *Postin Paipch*, (leggings), *Yezar*, *Takia* (Pillow cover), *Khalits* (purses or bags), *Kabar posh* (Shrouds), *Takposh* (hangings or covers) and '*Khawanposh* (dish covers).
- 97. Straus, Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 14
- 98. Birdwood, C.M. George, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
- 99. John, Irvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-15.
- 100. Vigne, G.T., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 124.
- 101. *Ibid.*
- 102. Bates Ellison, Charles, *Gazetteer of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1880; p. 101.
- 103. Moorcroft, William, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 194.
- 104. *Tarikh-i-Kalan*, Vol. I, Kashmir University Library; p. 362.
- 105. *Ibid.*
- 106. Moorcroft, William, MS. Eur. D., 261, p. 67.
- 107. *Census of India*, 1921.
- 108. Moorcroft, William, MS Eur D., 264, pp. 30-31.
- 109. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-34.
- 110. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-43.
- 111. Girdlestone, Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Girdlestone was British Resident in Kashmir, 1871.
- 112. *Ibid.*
- 113. Moorcroft, William, MS. Eur. D. 264, pp. 66-67.
- 114. Strauss, Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
- 115. Vigne, G.T., *Travels*, p. 120.
- 116. Lala, Ganeshi Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
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- 118. *Ibid.*
- 119. Bazaz, P.N., *op. cit.*, p. 77
- 120. *A Gazetteer of Kashmir op. cit.*, p. 54.
- 121. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
- 122. Charak, Sukhdav Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-142.
- 123. Vigne, G.T., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 121.
- 124. *Ibid.* The rates appear to be wrong. It is not understood what he means by a small rupee.
- 125. Moorcroft, William, MS. Eur. D. 164, p. 30.
- 126. Ganeshi Lal, Lala, *op. cit.*, p. 30. Also Diwan Krishen Lal, *op. cit.*, No. 69.
- 127. Lawrence, W.R., *op. cit.*, p. 375.
- 128. Bates, Charles, Ellison, Delhi, 1873; p. 33.
- 129. *Ibid.*
- 130. Bamzai, P.N.K., *Economic History*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
- 131. *Ibid.*

132. Thornton, Edwards, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 363.
133. Ganju, *op. cit.*, p. 50 (quoted).
134. John, Irwin, Shawls, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
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Chapter V

ARTISAN OF THE PARADISE

NATURE'S DESIGN

"Nature itself when creating the great valley of Kashmir and its enclosing wall of the mountains, seems to have assured to this territory not only a distinct geographical character, but also a historical existence of marked individuality". The continual chain of mountain ranges which enclose Kashmir valley have not only defended it from enemies but also lent grandeur and beauty to it. Treasured with the deposits of sparkling snow, Pir Pansal Range which covers it from the south west, gives it a touch of sublimity. And the great range spreading from the north-west to the north continuing eastwards with the rise in level of summits, blesses the valley with frequent glaciers of fair size. Out of these mountain ranges arise famous peaks touching skies and appear like sentinels guarding the beautiful valley from the curse of gods. The Tatakuti in the Pir Pansal, the diadem of Siva, Harmukta in the great range and above all the proud, Nanga Parbat in the south-eastern direction to the Nunkun peaks in Suru have ever stood, ever guarded despite the march of history.

The glaciers and other perennial deposits of snow have caused many lakes, springs, streams and rivulets contributing to the main river, Vitasta deriving its nomenclature from Rigveda.² While in the upper reaches there are famous glacial lakes like the Kōnsr nag (*Karamasaras*), the Panch Tarni and the Gangabal (from the *Harmukta*), on the level ground itself, the Dala, the Vular (*mahapadamasaras*) and the *Mansbal* adorn the valley. The Kōnsr Nag is a perennial source of water to Vesau (*visoka*), the Panch Tarni feeds the Liddar and the Gangabal offers the traditional source to the Sind. All these rivers join from the south, east and the north at different points to add to the vitasta which itself emerges from a spring at Verinag.

The rushing rivulets and streams criss-cross every dale and vale presenting a pattern so pleasing to the eye. In their course running over boulders making waterfalls and rippling over pebbly beds, they rush in a sort of rhythm, making twists and turns amidst the green paddy fields and growing grooves of willows along their banks to join the *Vitasta*. Meandering its path, through the plains of the valley, the *Vitasta* in a zigzag course, flows majestically making beautiful curves with its banks. From the *Gopadri* (*Shankracharya* or *Suliamanteng*), the curves of the river make an impressive scenario touching every sensitive mind.

With the graded slopes of towering mountains all around the fertile plain is embedded in nature's grand amphitheatre, decorated with green belts of paddy fields interspersed with patches of saffron concentrations and orchards of apple, almonds and cherries, etc. On the slopes grow the famous walnut trees. The seasons change like the moods of Cleopatra. The spring excites with the flowering peach,

almond blossoms, the narcissus, daffodils, daisies, the iris and above all the blood-red tulip, the summer enters with pleasant morning breeze showering cascades of scented flowers and fruits and lotuses tossing their heads over the shimmering waters of the Dal, the autumn is symbolized by the majestic chinar with burnished leaves and a variety of hues in perfect relief and winter thrills one with dancing flakes of snow and the trees, plants and houses presenting beautiful figures showing the broad contours under a thick cover of snow.

Indeed! Kashmir is the "paradise on earth",³ "a garden of eternal spring",⁴ "a terrestrial paradise of the Indies".⁵

Az Shah-i-Jehangir dame naza chu justand

Ba Khwahish-i-dil gift ki Kashmir digar hich.

(At the time of death, when Jehangir was asked about his last desire, from the depth of his heart he replied—"Kashmir, nothing else.")

STRONG MOTIVATION OF THE NATURE

In this great irregular oval consisting of a similarly shaped level vale in the centre called Kashmir, live the great people, who could not but be influenced by the overwhelming environment, inspiring them to shape a culture rich in thought, aesthetics and arts. Even Buddha was influenced by the pleasant climate and the scenic beauty of Kashmir. He is believed to have said that Kashmir was the best place for meditation.⁶ Abhinav Gupta, the great son of the soil, did not only contribute to the indigenous philosophy of *Saivism* but also to the rich treasure of aesthetics. According to him to knead nature into a work of art is nearest approximation to the knowledge of god-head. The beautiful objects of nature motivated the ancient people of Kashmir to anthropomorphise them giving artistic expression to their views about the world and its being. They thought that nature was the manifestation of an all-pervading force that is Siva and worshipped it in different forms. Following the course of pantheism, Kashmiri sculptors created aesthetically rich and beautiful forms of gods and goddesses in stone and metals, representing various manifestations of that Supreme Being and built lofty temples to worship them.

One of the names which the people of Kashmir were given was *Sastra-silpa* meaning the architects of stone. They had created name in the skill of building art. Mirza Haider Dughlat calls the temples built by the sculptors-cum-architects of Kashmir as the wonder of Kashmir. He says "The blocks are three to twenty *gaz* in length, one *gaz* in depth and one to five *gaz* in breadth. The marvel is how these stones were transported and erected".⁷ Iconography and cutting, chiseling and shaping small figurines of gods and goddesses, apart from Graeco-Buddhist art depicting scenes from the life of Buddha, have been the speciality of the sculptors of Kashmir.

NATURE GIFTS THEM WITH ARTISTIC GENIUS

Nature has gifted the people of Kashmir with the genius and the flair for giving expression to their latent artistic instinct. They have, therefore, worked miracles in the field of art. Even "in poetry and science they are not inferior to the Persians".⁸ The impact of nature is so much overbearing, that it moulded the human material into a refined and noble people. No wonder when Sir Francis Young Husband visited Kashmir, he wrote "...Amid the glorious mountains, breathing their free and bracing air, and brightened by the constant sunshine, there must have sprung a strong virile and yet aesthetic race? The beautiful Greece with its, purple hills and varied contour, its dancing seas and clear blue sky, produced the graceful Greeks. But Kashmir is more beautiful than Greece. It has the same blue sky and brilliant sunshine, but its purple hills are on a far grander scale, and if it has no sea, it has

lake and river and still more impressive snowy mountains. It has, too, greater variety of natural scenery, of field and forest, of rugged mountain and open valley. And to me who have seen both countries, Kashmir seems much the more likely to impress a race by its natural beauty. Has it made ever such impression?

The shawls for which the country is noted are some indication that its inhabitants have a sense of form and colour, and some delicacy and refinement. But a great people would have produced something more impressive than shawls. ... (and they have in the shape of great temples, architecture, lofty pediments irofoiled arches.)⁹

The inspirations to the artisans of Kashmir for working a beautiful design has not come only from the flora and fauna but also from the curves and the ripples of the rivers and lakes. Beautiful flowers apart, Kashmir is full of colourful and fascinating birds. "...the kingfishers, pride of Kashmir, flashing turquoise and emerald as they dart among the reeds, the green parrot who is a summer visitor as are the hoopoe and brilliant golden oriole."¹⁰ "Many designs in Kashmir's embroidery work show curvatures and zig-zag patterns. Moving of waves have frequently found place in the background details or the borders of shawls. "...nature has inspired geometric designs too: tendrils and vines have been looped and curled and twisted into myriad graceful arabesques, flowers and leaves have been massed together to make abstract, dappled backgrounds and even water ripples have been tamed into regularity".¹¹ Most of the Kashmiri shawls had flower designs on both the ends.¹²

THEY KNOW TO WORK ON STONE, WOOD AND METAL

The artisans did not only hammer and shape the stones to produce a temple structure like Martand but also moulded and designed out of metals, wood and paper. *Tabdan tarashi* and *khutamband ceilings* still extant in the city of Srinagar fill one with wonder. Paper is moulded into beautiful forms and then painted. An artisan had the skill of painting a rose which was so exact and life like that a butterfly sat on it. Similarly some master-craftsmen produced a carpet for presenting it to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When it was presented to him, he was actually tossing over the beautiful lawns of Kashmir. The waters of Mahasarit of the Dal Lake, communicated softness to the shawl which could not be given to it anywhere in Hindustan.¹³ Waters of the Mahasarit added magic to it. Nature provided almost total source material for the production of shawl, e.g. wool, water, air and also the inspiration for the designs. The finished product made Europeans especially the French, crazy about it. "The women felt in love with them at first sight."¹⁴

ALL JOINED TO MAKE HIM MISERABLE

Though nature had gifted the artisan of Kashmir with the artistic genius and all the source-material required to produce the elegant pieces of art, yet all the forces combined to place him in a kind of dispensation which made his life miserable. He was not given the treatment, he deserved. Everyone exploited him, the *karkhandar*, the Government, and the community as a whole. Even the British Colonial policy was hostile to their craft. Nature did not spare him either. Famines, floods and epidemics devastated him. No doubt, he attained excellence in art, but it was at the cost of something still precious—the man behind the art, "Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about the craftsmen of Kashmir is that they survived at all and were not, everyone, wiped out like the shawl weavers by the continual harsh treatment, starvation wages and miserable working conditions, they seem to have been subjected to after the Mughals were driven out of the valley."¹⁵

HARSH TAXATION POLICY

It was not only the harsh taxation policy, but also an "absurd and hateful method of levying taxes"

which pauperised the artisans of the paradise. The Pathans had no taxation policy; they ravaged Kashmir without any rules of the game. The Sikhs did have a policy. It was tough and harsh. Although it was the Pathan Governor, Karim Dad Khan who introduced the institution of *Dagshawl*, yet it were the Sikhs and the Dogras, who firmly rooted this cruel institution in the soil of Kashmir and enjoyed its fruits at the cost of the artisan. The institution was assigned the duty of stamping a manufactured shawl. Besides charging a fee for stamping the shawl, it also assessed its value to charge a tax on it. "... Before a loom shawl can legally be made, a small piece of the intended degree of fineness must be brought to *Dagshali*, the proposed size is named, and the price is thus calculated; the piece then receives the government stamp and is laid up in the *Dagshali*". The *karkhandar* received a paper describing the shawl and giving the date of stamp for which he pays at the time Rs 8/12% on the price of the shawl; when the shawl is nearly completed, it is taken to the *Dagshali* and the stamped price is worked into it¹⁶." According to Lala Ganeshi Lal (May 1846), six *annas* per rupee on the estimated price are charged after the seal is fixed on the shawl and the total of the dues comes to Rs. 148-8-0 of *Hari Singh* coinage.¹⁷

From each shop (factory) of shawl manufacture the following dues were charged.¹⁸

<i>Octroi</i>	<i>Cost of Load of Rice</i>	<i>Customary Dues</i>	<i>Total</i>
Rs. 117	Rs. 28-2-0	Rs. 3/-	148-2-0

Cost of load consisted of 25 *kharwars* of rice at the rate of Rs 2-2-0 while the market rate was only rupee one per *kharwar*.

Ellison Bates also informed us that before 1867, Government charged Rs. 48 from a *karkhandar* for every *Shal-baf* (weaver) in his employ¹⁹. Besides the import duty charged on the raw material, the Government charged an export duty of 7/15 on a long shawl and Rs 5/13 on a square shawl.²⁰ According to Lala Ganeshi Lal Rs. 5 or 6 are charged extra on every shop (factory) and shops are reckoned according to five labourers. Thus 2.5 labourers make one shop (loom). Annual tax on each worker is, therefore, Rs 49-10-0.²¹

In addition to loom-made shawls, there were handmade shawls. These shawls also were under *Dagshawl* and were to be stamped twice—first in their plain condition and then after the needle work. In its plain condition when it was stamped, a tax at the rate of 10.5 *chilki* rupee was charged²² for 4.55 yards. In similar fashion a tax at the rate of 18 *chilki* rupees²³ was charged after it was dyed and embroidered.

The harassment caused by the battalions of *kardars* employed by the *Dagshal* made things still worse. Each day these *kardars* visited the workshops. Punishments were inflicted for clandestine weaving. "The weavers never manage to complete more than a meter of shawl before the rapacious collector (*kardar*) exacts his dues. This is why, of the thousands of shawls, I have seen in Kashmir, everyone without exception was made up of at least five pieces sewn together.... this would to my mind, greatly lessen their value on French market.²⁴ Such a reprehensible and grasping behaviour of the *kardars*, did only tell upon the art itself, but also caused stress and strain to the artisan. The system had become more exacting, when the revenue from the Shawl Industry was farmed out to individual contractors. During the major part of the second half of the 19th century, it was farmed out to Raj Kak Dhar, who was also the *Daroga-i-Dagshal*. Rajkak had belonged to the nobility of Dhars.²⁵ He had played an important role along with his father, Birbal Dhar in vanquishing Afghan rulers in Kashmir with the help of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's forces. There were about 200 Pandits working in *Dagshal*.²⁶ They were assigned the duty of inspecting the *karkhanas*. They would charge illegal expenses from

the *karkhandars* for their boat hire and road transportation, etc.²⁷ The *karkhandars*, in return, shifted the incidence of these charges on the weavers. The *karkhandar* was "obliged to fee liberally all Government officials in any way connected with the trade, and it is affirmed, apparently on good grounds, that this *dusturi* or illegal gratification is shared in by the highest officers of the state down to the lowest Pandit connected with the *dagshal* : these fees are stated to amount to little less than another 25 percent²⁸."

THE PRACTICE OF NILIV

The practice of selling saffron and grains from out of the government share to the inhabitants of the city of Srinagar on higher rates was introduced by the Afgans. Except the brief interlude in which this practice was given up during the Afgan rule itself, the practice continued to be in operation unabatedly during the the Sikh and Dogra periods—up to 1877 when the shawl trade had almost come to dead end. The major chunk of city population was that of the *Shal-bafs* and artisans working in other arts and crafts. Such a forced selling of grains and saffron to the artisans was called *niliv* or *tarah*. This unique inexplicable practice had severely broken the back of shawl weavers and other artisan classes. "In this way these taxes and *niliv* system continued from king to king till the shawl weavers became paupers²⁹." At the end of the Afgan rule the number of looms had come down to six thousand, "yet the duty was raised to three *annas* per rupee ad valorem and twelve *kharwars* of *shali* at three rupees per *kharwar* of which the actual market price was only one rupee³⁰."

According to W.R. Lawrence, the shawl industry was lucrative during his times and the state charged Rs. 30 per annum from the employers of the shawl weavers per head and also charged an import duty of 20% on the finished goods and an export duty of Rs. 7.15 on a long shawl and Rs. 5.13 on a square shawl; it was a poor industry for the weavers.

THE DUTIES CHARGED

The raw material collected and transported from distant places cost high. It became costlier due to the import duty charged by the government. Even the export duty was charged on the finished shawls. These duties were increased when the income from shawl earnings showed a rising tendency. In fact, "... with the differing rulers came the changing methods of collecting taxes, sometimes a poll tax on the weaver, sometimes a tax on the loom, at times the state collected the finished shawl and marketed it, and after deducting the taxes due, the maker got what was left³¹." His condition was "miserably poor...and could scarcely procure subsistence³²."

EARNINGS

An eyewitness account during the year 1812-13 puts the earnings of a shawl weaver as -1-1-2 to 1-1-14 *pice* (Rs. 1 = 64 *pice*) a day.³³ According to this source the "shawl weavers are in a most poverty-stricken condition." On the other hand, G.T. Vigne puts the earning of a shawl weaver as one small rupee a day.³⁴ This was equal to 10 to 12 shillings in his country. A less skilled worker, according to him earned only half a rupee³⁵ a day. In fact the earnings of a weaver in A.D. 1823, were one *anna*³⁶ (1/16 of a rupee) and was increased to two *annas* in 1835 and then to *annas* six maximum at the end of the Sikh Rule.³⁷ W.R. Lawrence puts the wage of a shawl weaver one or two *annas* per diem during 1871.³⁸ On the other hand, according to Charles Ellison Bates (1878), a first rate weaver earned four to five pence a day, but generally it is only three pence a day.³⁹ A part of this wage, they are forced to take in rice at a rate higher than prevalent in market. The wages which the weavers earned after the Franco-German war, could naturally be on the lower side because of the crisis faced by the shawl industry those days.

SPINNERS

About a hundred thousand females worked as spinners who supplied the yarn to the weavers. A hard working, dexterous spinner approximately earned from Rs. 3 to Rs. 3.5 per month⁴⁰ (six to seven shillings). This amount would include the price of the wool paid by the spinner and after making due deductions it would leave only Re. One and *annas* eight for her wages.⁴¹ A spinner had not only to spin but also to clean the wool with great care.

EARNINGS OF OTHER ARTISANS

Artisans working in other trades also received wages, which could hardly keep their body and soul together. A male weaver engaged in carpet weaving received from four *annas* to twelve *annas* per day. This was an enhanced rate given after making all round rise in the rates of wages due to general rise in prices.⁴² A *hauzwhole*, in paper making craft, received two *annas* a duster⁴³ (a quire) and a skillful worker could hardly turn out about four quires of *fermashi* paper a day. A *mohrakash* (rubber) received from four *annas* to eight *annas* a duster⁴³. He could not exceed a quire a day. Those engaged in the drying process of the paper received *annas* two a day.⁴⁴ A shop of four or five people would be able to produce only two rifles a month. For the labour charges the government would give them Rs. Thirty each rifle.⁴⁵ Five people could thus earn Rs. Sixty a month shared at the rate of Rs. Twelve by each of them, say at six *annas* to seven per diem.

The working conditions of the weavers and other artisans contrasted with the exquisite beauty of the masterpieces of art which they produced. They worked in small, unventilated and dilapidated rooms from dawn to dusk with their backs bent and eyes concentrated over the design they wove on the loom or worked with a needle. Due to the unhygienic conditions, lack of nourishment and overwork, they suffered from chest infection, rheumatism, and scrofula.⁴⁶ Their *Ustad* or *Karkhandar* (owner) would lend them money on marriages or other social functions, which they were never able to repay. And then, they had to be his bonded labourers throughout their lives. Robert Thorp was shocked to see their condition: "Do they never picture to themselves these low-roomed, ill ventilated abodes, where the loom workers sit at their forced labour day after day, toiling for their miserable pittance! These coloured threads of wool are not the only ones which these looms weave to their completion; threads of life more costly than those of the softest *poshm*, whose price would be demanded by Heaven yet, are spun out there on loom of sickness and suffering⁴⁷."

THE CONTRAST

The *Karkhandars*, the brokers and the merchants, on the other hand, lived a luxurious life from the fabulous profits they earned. These people lived in palatial houses and maintained a large herem⁴⁸. Some of them used milk instead of water in their *Hukas*.⁴⁹ A few of them dabbled in politics and rubbed their shoulders with the ruling nobility and were loyal to the rulers and posed to be the leaders of the people. They had organised their offices in the major cities of the Indian sub-continent. The *Shal-bafs* were a desperate lot. They even rose in a revolt against the government (1865).

The artisans of Kashmir, inspired by the richness of the natural environment and motivated by the traditionally acquired artistic instinct, produced such pieces of excellent art as were adored and praised by the art lovers throughout the world. But unfortunately, it was the human factor, the *karkhandar* or the men in the government who were completely indifferent towards their welfare.

ARTISANS SHUN THEIR CRAFT

In this unique dispensation of things, generations of artisan families were destroyed. The artisan was so much dedicated to the art that he forced his son to take up the traditional art of his

forefathers as his career. He did so with pride and inherited the poor life of his father. According to Erich Von Schonberg, "The childhood of weavers children ceased", abruptly at about the age of five, when they were considered old enough to work on looms and contribute to the family's meagre budget — 'and thus another human being enters on a career of wretchedness, and rears children, who in turn, become heirs to his misery.' With all his dedication to the art, his condition was made so helpless that he voluntarily wanted to run away from it. During Sikh times at least 22 weavers of shawls cut off their thumbs⁵⁰, so that they could not be forced to do the work again. The situation was redeemed by later Sikh governors and shawl industry picked up, once again so much so that, the best ever shawls were produced during the time of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. In any case the economic condition of shawl weavers and the artisans working in other handicraft industries continued to be bad. Though the household life continued to be very poor, yet the artist never died in them. Perhaps they were invigorated by the natural environment. "What one can never understand is how such beauty of shape and perfect blending of colours can be created and made complete in those dirty, squalid, poverty stricken surroundings; may be those who so labour have but near and far sight, that they can only see that material, wood, metal, papier-mache on which they work, and in the distance the glorious shades of Kashmir's lakes, hills and mountains, together with the beauties of her trees, flowers and birds⁵¹."

Indeed! the artisan of the paradise, who got strength from Kashmir's overbearing natural environment was a victim of unjust human dispensation.

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38. Lawrence, W.R., *Valley*, p. 375.
39. Bates, Charles Ellison, *op. cit.*, Delhi, 1873; p. 33.
40. Moorcroft, William, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 172-73.
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42. *Census Report* - 1921.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. Bamzai, P.N.K., *Socio-economic History*, New Delhi, 1987; p. 214.
46. Bates, Charles Ellison, *op. cit.*, Delhi, 1873; p. 33.
47. Thorp, Robert, *op. cit.*, London, 1870; p. 52
48. Bamzai, P.N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 8.
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50. Gervis, Pearce, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

Chapter VI

THE REVOLT

DOGRA CONCEPT OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

Under the Treaty of Amritsar (1846), the Jammu and Kashmir territory was transferred to Maharaja Gulab Singh for a paltry consideration of Rs. 75 lakh, besides one horse, twelve perfect shawl-goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Kashmir shawls¹ to be presented annually. Interestingly, after this deal, Maharaja Gulab Singh had obsessed himself with the strong conviction that he had purchased Kashmir and that it was his personal property.

The concept of personal property was carried by Maharaja Ranbir Singh as an ancestral legacy to his royal progeny by means of his *Dastur-ul-Amal* issued in A.D. 1882. This instruction was followed by Maharaja Pratap Singh in its letter and spirit. He wrote to his Chief Minister on 13 December 1918² that lands of Kashmir belonged to the ruling chief exclusively for the simple reason that the territories of Kashmir were purchased by them. It was therefore obvious that the peasant could not have any proprietary rights. He did have the occupancy rights but not confirmed by law in writing. This legacy had been bequeathed to him from his ancestors and was recognised and respected by the village community as his 'Miras'.

Circumstances had so conspired against him that he could not hold even to his 'Miras'. He had been pressed down to the condition of a coolie cultivating the state property³ at the subsistence allowance. It was curious to watch him being grabbed of whatever rights he had in land. Pressurised beyond endurance to the huge demands of revenue and fictitious arrears and hunted down for 'begaar', the peasant deserted his land. On his return he would feel almost stunned to see his piece of land already usurped by the powerful land grabbers. He would not get even a niche to bury his near and dear ones. "O Sahib (addressing towards W.R. Lawrence), I have come back from the Punjab to my native village, but they will not give my land back. Lo, here in this bundle is my dead child and I have not even so much as a bit of ground in which to bury the body⁴." He would cry and burst into tears.

Apart from the expropriation of land by the grabbers and extortion of huge land revenue demands including fraudulently piled up arrears, the cultivator was charged innumerable legitimate and illegitimate taxes. He was made to run the households of revenue officials by providing almost every essential commodity available in rural areas, free of cost.

For ages the peasant had been emasculated. He had developed the traits of a coward. He would accept any thing as ordained by fate and had not the courage to rise against tyranny. Every thing appeared futile to him. Obsessed with this attitude he had been made to work for others, the shawl weavers, official classes in the city and others. "He is a machine to produce *Shali* for very large and mostly idle city population⁵." It was tragic that they had lost their right both in their land and over their crops.⁶ In short the condition of the peasant cultivator before the land settlement of W.R. Lawrence was "infinitely worse than the Tiers Estate (Third Estate) before the French Revolution⁷." The only difference was that there were no Rousseau and Voltaire then in Kashmir.

ARTISANS PLACED IN THE SAME STRAIT

Parallel to the condition of the peasants who preferred to desert the land by roving from village to village or going to the plains of the Punjab, the craftsman either voluntarily disabled himself to run away from the craft or escaped to the cities of the Punjab to continue his craft or changed from one craft to another. Both of them were at the mercy of the *Kardar* who collected legal and illegal dues from them for their respective revenue farmers. The Afgans treated Kashmir as a colony and extorted as much revenue from the peasants and the craftsmen as was possible. The Sikh governors wanted to finance the military campaigns of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and therefore taxed the craftsmen and the peasantry heavily by means of sugar coated harsh innovations of governor Mehan Singh.

It was interesting to note that the revenue from the shawl industry was equally substantial and each competed to overtake the other. Therefore, the Dogras who held the strong conviction that Kashmir was their personal property having paid Rs. 75 lakh under the Treaty of Amritsar, wanted to make as much profit from their investment as possible. They took every step to increase land revenue as well as the revenue from the shawl industry and other handicrafts. One might argue that Maharaja Ranbir Singh did many things to improve land tenure system and shawl and silk industries in Kashmir. He gave lot of tax relief to the zamindars by issuing *Dastur-ul-Amal* on 6 October 1857. He distributed fallow lands in the shape of various kinds of *Chaks*, then he introduced *Chaklabandi* system and again in 1880 he introduced *Assamiwar-Khewat*. The whole idea behind these efforts was to create conditions which could give him maximum revenue. Had his efforts been directed towards improving the lot of the peasants and artisans, neither the peasantry nor the artisan classes could have been placed in the tragic state as they were. shawl industry could have withstood the dreadful consequences of the Franco-German War and the peasants could have stuck to their holdings and not deserted them.

SYMPTOMS OF REVOLT

The Shawl Industry, especially had the potential of giving good revenue, but it proved to be its bane. The more the Industry prospered, the more were the taxes charged and more the profits grabbed by the *Karkhandars* and the revenue farmers and less was the residue left for wages to the men behind the crafts. It was outrageous! Patience has also its limits. How long could they wait?

Previously also (in 1833), when Jamadar Khushal Singh had perpetrated the wanton destruction of the property and the means of production of the people of Kashmir (both craftsmen and peasants) for extorting huge revenues to please his master at Lahore, they had risen in a revolt and marched to Lahore and Amritsar to make mercy appeals to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was during these days that weak shawl weavers had cut off their fingers or damaged their eyes voluntarily to escape the atrocious demands of the shawl contractor⁸. Despondent and desperate, terror and famine stricken as they were, dared the arduous march in which many of them succumbed in the way, unwept, unsung and unburied.⁹

Even in A.D. 1847, the shawl weavers had mustered courage to go on strike for getting the taxes like *Baj* and *Nazrana* reduced¹⁰. There were other grievances also. But due to the timely intervention of

Renell Taylor representing H.M. Lawrence (representative of the Governor General) things were settled amicably. A meeting of traders, merchants, *Karkhandars* and the *Daroga of Dagshal* was called. They decided to revise the schedule of wages and taxes giving cosmetic relief to the weavers. Also the weaver could, now, be a bonded labourer only for four years and not for life. The price of *Shali* to the weavers was reduced by a quarter rupee¹¹. It was a period of trial and tribulation for the *Shal-bafs*.

KASHMIR WEAVERS JOIN THE 1857 REVOLT

Pentup feelings of anger against generation-old unjust and tyrannical system found expression in the revolt of 1857. A colony of Kashmiri shawl weavers, as a part of British colonial policy, had been established in Ludhiana. When the call for a revolt was given by the freedom fighters, this colony of shawl weavers was among the foremost in "plundering the Government stores, in pillaging the premises of the American mission, in burning the churches and buildings, in destroying the printing presses and in pointing out the residences of Government officials, or known well-wishers of government as objects of vengeance for the mutinous troops¹²." British colonialists under the leadership of East India Company had used these shawl weavers for producing well designed imitation of Kashmir shawls for the European market. This had presented a stiff competition to the genuine shawl weavers in Kashmir and was, therefore, contributing towards the decline of this traditional industry. Although the shawl weavers at Ludhiana were relatively better paid and sheltered, yet they could not even for a moment, forget their hearth and home in the beautiful valley of Kashmir which they loved so dearly. No doubt they were forced due to circumstances to take up a calling in the heat and dust of the plains of the Punjab, yet they were not unaware of the trickery of the East India Company. There was a strong motivation behind their spontaneous rising against the Company Rule.

SHAWL-BAF RISING, 1865

The rising of 1857, though crushed, was the first nail in the coffin of the discredited British Rule in India. It had struck the note of defiance and revolt even though it continued to be dormant for some time. The situation had so developed as to unleash revolutionary forces in the following century, under the leadership of the Indian National Congress which was founded in A.D. 1885. This brought British Rule in direct confrontation with the people of the subcontinent. Atmosphere of defiance and challenge to the authority for achieving their just demands had trickled down to princely states also. Kashmir could not have been an exception to this influence. Perhaps Kashmir *Shawl-bafs* were the first among the princely states who rose in defiance of the authority for their just demands in this period of turbulence and dormant revolt.¹³ They had already proved their mettle in 1857 at Ludhiana. No doubt weavers at Baroach had risen in a mutiny against the English for stopping buying of cotton yarn as back as 1630.¹⁴ Weavers of Baroda also had protested by leaving the city, against the tyranny of the Governor.¹⁵ But among the princely states, weavers of Kashmir were the first to rise in revolt against the authorities.

It is well known that the shawl industry made progress during the time of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. The export of shawls during A.D. 1860-70, averaged between Rs. 25 and 28 lakhs annually¹⁶. The condition of weavers continued to be miserable. Although they worked from dawn to dusk and sometimes, the whole night, yet their earnings could hardly keep their body and soul together. They did earn Rs. 7 to 8 per month, but had to pay taxes up to Rs. 5 per month.¹⁷ This forced them to undergo a debt leaving them almost starving for the month. Such a sorry state of affairs was caused because the Government had proposed to recover Rs. 12 lakh from shawl weavers through the institution of *dagshal* which was under the farm of Pt. Rajkak Dhar.

Every means of extortion for the purpose was adopted by Pt. Raj Kak Dhar. He used force. A

contingent of *kardars* at his disposal blackmailed and harassed the weavers. The *karkhandar* also did not resent at his end. He was after fattening his profits. Such a situation gave *Shal-bafs* a feeling that they were serfs working for others. They had actually the status of bonded labours. They were not permitted to change their master¹⁸ for better bargaining. All the openings for their progress had been plugged.

29 April, 1865 was a historic day. They collected at a place near Zaldagar, Srinagar, and raised the standard of revolt against the unjust order. In order to submit the memorandum of their grievances to the Governor at his residence, they marched in a procession towards Zaldagar. But Pt. Raj Kak Dhar as is believed, manoeuvred a myth and informed the Governor that they would attack his house and kill him.¹⁹ Accordingly he took severe measures. The marchers moved ahead undaunted amidst the din of slogans. They even burnt the effigy of Pt. Raj Kak Dhar,²⁰ *Daroga-i-Dagshal*. Not before too long, the processionists were confronted with the armed contingent of troops under the command of Col. Bijoy Singh.²¹ He warned the processionists to disperse. It was a life and death struggle for them and they refused to obey the orders. The troops encircled them and fired indiscriminately. It was a tactic generally used against the enemy. 'After some deaths, the procession ran towards the bridge of Haji Rather, and most of them (after having been pursued by the soldiers) fell into the marshy canal and got drowned. Hundreds of workers suffered minor and major injuries and at last 28 dead bodies were returned to the people by the army²².'

Even after using such a strong force resulting in the death of so many persons, the authorities continued with a long spree of arrests of *Shal-bafs* and their ring leaders. Hundreds of them were thrown into the prison at Habak.²³ Many of them lost their lives due to starvation and cold. Those who were leaders were ruthlessly beaten and two of them Ali Baba and Sheikh Rasool lost their lives in the process. Sona Shah and Qudlala were sent to the Bahu Fort at Jammu.²⁴

This was the first major rising of its kind fought for the economic emancipation of the people of Kashmir and was a signal for the destitute peasantry. The persons who lost their lives can verily be called the first martyrs of Kashmir's struggle for economic emancipation from the social and political institutions which exploited them. It shook the foundations of the concept of Kashmir being a personal property of a king and laid the firm base for the future struggle of the people of Kashmir which followed in the ensuing century.

UNIQUE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE ARTISAN AND THE PEASANTRY

At the end of Maharaja Ranbir Singh's rule, the Kashmir peasantry was in a state of abject poverty. It was restive. Their defiant mood had found expression in 1877 when they had demonstratively complained to Maharaja Ranbir Singh against the formidable and corrupt officials at Achhabal and had managed to get back all that was taken as bribes by those officials.²⁵ But the hold of the bureaucracy was strong and these peasants had to bleed through nose for having complained to the Maharaja.²⁶ These tyrannies were inflicted on the farmers by Wazir Punnoo. The defiant mood of the peasantry could have taken the shape of a spontaneous convulsion of a major dimension, had not the British India Government forced the Land Settlement of 1887 under the able guidance of W.R. Lawrence.

The defiance and protest among the artisans, on the other hand, was so deeprooted that it could sometimes take a negative form of expression. The shawl barons who controlled the industry mostly belonged to the Shia sect of Muslims and lived in the Zadibal area of the city of Srinagar. The shawl barons owned *karkhanas* and lived in mansions leading luxurious lives. The weavers could hardly make both ends meet. Class jealousy had reached to a point that a minor incident could ignite a big fire. So it happened in 1872. The jealousy took a communal turn resulting in a major Shia Sunni riot which gave a serious jolt to an already tattered industry.

There was a unique link up, though indirect, between the artisans and the peasantry of Kashmir. Sometimes this linkup would have a direct bearing on the economic life of the both. Part of the wages of the shawl weavers was given in kind in the shape of *shali* (paddy). The price of *Shali* would, therefore, make lot of difference in their wage-earnings. Apart from this, the craftsmen, in an hour of crisis, took refuge in agriculture by working as hired labourers on the land. But, now, unfortunately, due to the growth of landlordism and the phenomenon of land grabbing and *corvee*, the peasant had already deserted the land (prior to the Land Settlement of 1887). So the condition of agriculture was not that prosperous as to provide employment to the artisans thrown out of employment. Conversely, the farmers could take to various crafts, but the artisan industry itself was in a state of decline. It was, therefore, a heart rending situation. The land and revenue settlement of W.R. Lawrence brought new life and hope to the peasantry but the artisans continued to struggle seeking readjustment for paltry earnings. Many artisans took to carpet weaving which was picking up fast. Previously also, they were not in a happy position but they were the masters of their specialized crafts, which they had to lose.

GANDHI ENKINDLES NEW HOPE

Amidst an atmosphere of total gloom and helplessness which pervaded both the rural and urban areas of Kashmir, Gandhiji appeared like a meteor on the political scene of India. His leadership provided encouragement to the already defiant mood of the people by launching an organised movement of passive resistance against the policy of British colonialists. Such a defiant mood of people could be gauged from the resistance which young Bengal put up against the Partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905. The atmosphere was further encouraged by the liberation struggles in Ireland, Turkey, Egypt and Italy. The peoples revolution against the Tsar in Russia in 1905 and finally the October Revolution 1917 sent the signals of hope and encouragement to the working people of the world. The scenario appeared changing slowly.

By the time, the people in British India were in complete ferment, leading to the gruesome tragedy at Jalianwalla Bagh, the Banihal Cart Road had been completed and thrown open to public in 1922²⁷. The railway link between Sialkot and Jammu had already been established in A.D. 1915. The Jehlum Valley Road had connected Kashmir with Rawalpindi (in Punjab) way back in 1890. With the establishment of modern road links coupled with telephone and telegraph facilities, easy flow of new ideas into the valley had become possible. No wonder Kashmir was tremendously influenced by what was happening in British India and all other parts of the world. It had picked up the temper obtaining in the subcontinent.

First simmerings of this temper manifested in the shape of silk factory workers strikes as early as 1917 and 1920 for increasing their wages.²⁸ Encouraged by these strikes, silk factory workers went in for a major confrontation with the authorities in 1924 which later on proved to be an important milestone on the way to Kashmir's struggle for economic and political emancipation. It so happened that workers of the silk factory (Srinagar) gave a call for strike against the "insufficiency of wages, corruption of the officials and the tyrannies of the inspecting staff²⁹." The strike could have taken its own course, had not the authorities provoked the workers by calling the troops inside the factory. The action was uncalled for. The workers resented and demonstrated violently against the authorities. Tempers pitched high resulting in a clash between the troops and the unarmed workers. Suddenly the troops opened fire due to which seven workers were killed and forty of them injured.³⁰ In sympathy the people of the city assembled outside the factory in an open ground (Hozuri Bagh ground) and supported the cause of the factory workers. Revenue Minister appeared on the scene. The people defied his orders. The irresponsible Minister let loose about two hundred cavalry soldiers, armed with guns and spears on the defenseless

people³¹. A number of people were killed. The work-force of this factory was constituted of mostly poor peasants from the nearby villages. The rearers of the silk cocoons who made the supplies to this factory also were peasants. The silk spun in the filatures of the factory was partly supplied to the weavers of the city who worked on the looms installed in their cottages or the *karkhandars* of the rich silk producers. The silk factory workers' strike in 1924 was, therefore, immensely important and a contributory factor in arousing consciousness among the peasants and the artisans of Kashmir.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Treaty of Amritsar*, Article X. see Appendix A.
2. The letter says, "As you are already aware the proprietary rights in all lands of Kashmir belong to the ruling chief exclusively for the simple reason that the territories of Kashmir were purchased by my late lamented grandfather, Maharaja Gulab Singh ji and hence any sale of such land by any one else is illegal" (File No. 191/H-75, Block-C of 1906, Government Records).
3. Wingate, A., *op. cit.*, Pt. 10.
4. Knight, describes the episode after visiting a village along with W.R. Lawrence.
5. Wingate, A., *op. cit.*, Pt. 37.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Lawrence, W.R., *op. cit.*, p. 2.
8. *Dastur-ul-Amal* contained many other reforms
9. Parimu, R.K., *History of Sikh Rule*, *op. cit.*, p. 277.
10. *Khazir Shah's Masnavi* (Research Deptt. Library, Srinagar).
11. Panikar, K.M., *Founding of Kashmir State*, London, 1953; p. 139.
12. Taylor, Renell, *A Report*, Lahore, 1876; p. 126
13. Bates, Ellison, *op. cit.*, Delhi, 1880, pp. 36-37.
14. There were instances of revolt in Baroach and Baroda also.
15. Ray, Tapan Chaudhry, *Mughal India, Camb. Economic History of India*, Camb., 1983; p. 286.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Lawrence, W.R., *op. cit.*, p. 30.
18. Bamzai, P.N.K., *Kashmir History*, New Delhi, 1973; p. 668.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Khan, Gulam Hassan, Prof., *Freedom Movement in Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1980 p. 79.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Nab Shah, *Wajed-ul-Tawarikh*, p. 201, Archives, Srinagar.
24. File No. 313E of 1865, *Kashmir Government Records*.
25. Khan, Gulam Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
26. Bamzai, P.N.K., *op. cit.*, p.667
27. Khasta, Hargopal, *Guldasta-i-Kashmir*, Lahore, 1883; pp. 860-61.
28. Bamzai, P.N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 693.
29. OER, FN. 26/FS. 6., Director Sericulture to First Assistant to Resident, 31. March 1920. JKA.
30. *Riot Enquiry Committee Report*, Part I, p. III, Statement of Dr. Wahid, Srinagar, 1931
31. *Administrative Report*, J. & K. Government, Srinagar, S. 1981; 1932.
32. Khan, Ghulam Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

Chapter VII

ARTISANS FORM THE VANGUARD

The temper of defiance and revolt slowly transformed into an organised political movement in the first half of the 20th century. The momentum for growth and development of the artisan industries, therefore, took place only when the Monarchy and age-old feudal order were abolished and a democratic system established in Kashmir. Till then it was a mixed package of struggle for political freedom and economic emancipation. The artisan had, meanwhile, to sustain the craft and his ownself. In this noble task the artisans of Kashmir had to make tremendous sacrifices.

PERIOD OF READJUSTMENT AND QUALITATIVE DECLINE

When Maharaja Pratap Singh took over after the death of his father (1885), the condition of artisan industries in Kashmir was in a state of flux. It was a period of readjustment and resettlement. The shawl industry had received a death blow and there was a horizontal movement of the artisans from the largest industry to other sister industries especially carpet. It was encouraged by the Government in the interests of the artisans rendered jobless. There was also the vertical movement. For instance within the woollen industry, weavers moved from the weaving of *kani-shawl* to *amlakar-shawl*. They changed from inlaid-design *pashmina* weaving to plain *pashmina* weaving — for *amlakar-shawl* or *alwan* or *dussa*. They changed from *pashmina* to *raffal*. *Raffal* is the stuff woven from *non-pashmina* wool. There was also the geographical movement of the artisans. Desperate and nervous they moved to villages or to the plains of the Punjab for seeking new adjustments.

There was pressure on the carpet industry and as a result, it expanded. Due to the availability of cheap labour and better technical guidance given by the European entrepreneurs, the carpet industry prospered a lot. The six carpet factories located in the city of Srinagar gave employment to 1342 persons.¹ A good number of women were employed as spinners for these factories who worked in their homes and were paid wages on contract basis. Other industries and crafts had shown qualitative decline. The Government as a reaction to their disastrous taxation policy in the past had altogether desisted from imposing any taxes on artisan industries. They had also given up the justified policy of quality control which had led to the unhealthy competition among various artisans units for capturing markets by producing goods on cheap rates. The specialised artisan communities who followed traditional crafts with meticulous honesty, had already disintegrated. There was a fall in the standard of dyes, stuffs used and the workmanship of the craftsmen. But in their bulk, the demand for goods produced had increased. The reason was, the boycott of foreign goods made as a result of provocation given by the British announcement of the partition of Bengal in 1905. Other industries like embroidered *namdas* got a great boost after the war. The export of *namdas* after being embroidered in Kashmir 'ran into lakhs in the First World War.'²

SWADESHI AND NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENTS

Some traces of the production of the legendary shawl persisted with a few old master craftsmen out of their pride and love for the product even after the war. In fact these master craftsmen were the persons who prepared the shawls which Government of Kashmir was obliged to offer to the British Government annually under treaty obligations. But due to the insensitive attitude of the government and lack of any kind of incentive given to this craft, it was finally lost. *Amlikar-shawls* of *pashmina* and *raffal* continued to be produced for the Indian market especially Bengal where it is acceptable as a wear even by menfolk. "The demand for *alwan* and *dussas* from Indian markets increased. *Raffal* yarn imported from foreign countries came into wider use, and its products began to be sold to ignorant customers, in place of genuine Kashmir shawls".³ For want of adequate capital, labour and skill, the shawl industry could not take full use of the short-lived effects of the Swadeshi Movement of 1905. When the momentum of Swadeshi Movement receded, the manufactured foreign goods again flooded the market and the demand for the handicrafts of Kashmir, in general and the woollen goods in particular fell to low levels. The demand for Kashmir woollens increased and decreased in the following manner. It increased from 5,146 mds. in 1903-4 to 5,320 mds. in 1904-5 and to 5,819 mds. in 1905-6 and decreased from 5,339 mds. in 1906-7 to 2,977 mds. in 1913-14.⁴

Master-craftsmen in papier mache and wood carving could still prove their clout. In 1911, the coronation *Durbar* of King George V was held in Delhi with traditional pomp and gaiety. "The facade of the *Durbar hall* was a magnificent creation of carved wood and painted panels".⁵ It was the contribution of papier mache painters and wood-carvers of Kashmir. Maharaja Pratap Singh felt flattered when the king appreciatively admired the art. The panels were then presented to the king by the Maharaja. The people involved in papier mache in 1916 had gone up to 150 persons⁶, while in 1819, according to Moorcroft, there were only 40.

With the launching of Non-Cooperation Movement in A.D. 1920, the wave of boycotting foreign goods, spread like wild fire. It enhanced the demand for goods produced in the country. The goods produced by the artisans of the country in general and *khadi* in particular was purchased by the people with pride. It gave a great boost to the artisan industries in Kashmir also.

UPSETTING THE APPLE CART

Meanwhile the death of Maharaja Pratap Singh and coming of Maharaja Hari Singh changed the whole political scenario in Kashmir. It totally upset the apple cart of the British Indian Government. The Britishers, perhaps had an inkling of Maharaja Hari Singh's bent of mind and, therefore, had tried to pressurize him by blackmailing him in a scandal known as "The Adventures of Mr. A" which was used to humble him and then win him over to their side. Earlier they had thought because he had come down from the direct lineage of Maharaja Gulab Singh, who had been helped by them, and that being the son of Raja Amar Singh, he would be loyal to them. They had taken pains in getting him educated in their own style in the colleges of their choice and under their own teachers.⁷ But their hopes were belied. Maharaja Hari Singh was a hard nut to crack.

Maharaja Hari Singh was modern in outlook, notwithstanding his feudal disposition. He had widely toured the advanced countries of the west and had the feel of various political and economic trends prevailing over there. Therefore he could not put up with the British patting. He began with asking the British Resident in Srinagar to remove the Union Jack from the Residency building. On not doing so, he got it removed by a detachment of state forces,⁸ though it was later restored after the intervention of the Political Department. But the Maharaja did not relent in his orders to prohibit the Resident from moving to Jammu along with the *Durbar*. Similarly he made the State Flag to fly along with the Union

Jack at Gilgit which was not the practice till then.⁹ He even replaced British and Indian troops stationed at Gilgit by state troops.¹⁰ He confronted the British Political Department with a proposal¹¹ to close the Gilgit Agency and restore its administration to the State.

Though the Maharaja took cudgels with the Political Department, yet he took pains to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people. He appeared well intentioned. When his coronation, took place in Feb., 1925, he declared in his proclamation, "my religion is justice." He made an announcement of what he called certain 'boons' for uplifting the poor people of Kashmir. These boons included proposals for improving educational and health conditions, providing drinking water facilities and giving concession to the *zamindars* (peasants) of the state. Though there was no mention of any direct boons for the artisan class, yet providing of improved health and educational facilities did make lot of difference to them. He passed the compulsory Education Act according to which primary education was made compulsory for boys in the cities of Srinagar and Jammu. It was in the city of Srinagar that the bulk of Kashmir's artisans were clustered around its slums. Such a step was, therefore, a boon for these illiterate, ignorant and poverty stricken artisans. Being ignorant, these artisans married their children at a very young age, desiring to have additional earners in the family (especially males). They would get caught in a vicious circle which ultimately placed them in perpetual poverty. What rescued them from this vicious circle was the passing of the Prevention of Infants Marriage Act. According to the Act the marriage of boys and girls, not attaining the age of 18 and 14 years, respectively, was treated as a penal offence. This 'boon' showered upon the artisans proved a panacea for them. It discouraged early marriage and reduced the pressure on overburdened artisan families.

WAVE OF CONSCIOUSNESS REACHES KASHMIR

Freedom struggle in British India had taken long strides when Maharaja Hari Singh took over in Kashmir. A surge of anger had gripped people following the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and the launching of the Non-Cooperation Movement by Gandhiji. Later, in 1929, Jawahar Lal Nehru had added a new content to the movement by asking for complete independence.

Kashmir could not be immune to the wave of National Consciousness swaying the country. This time, there were willing recipients in Kashmir. Schools and Colleges in Jammu and Kashmir and the Universities in other parts of the country had sent out many Kashmiri young men from under their portals with modern ideas. Some of them had learnt a lot from their experiences in other parts of the country. Muslim young men, who were mostly the students of Aligarh University had come into contact with the leaders of the National Movement and Pan-Islamism and were influenced by them.

Majority of the people in the city of Srinagar were artisans who were Muslims, both, Shias and Sunnis. At the other end was a middle class of Government servants who were Hindus or the *karkhandars* who were Muslims. Muslim service class was conspicuously absent for they were deprived of modern educational opportunities by their Mullahs who were against English education. They had confined them to religious education only. But the times had changed and Muslim young men, defying the Mullahs had started adopting to English. They wanted to take Government service as their career. Although people in the city, who were overwhelmingly Muslims, were still under the influence of obscurantist Mullahs, yet the mercantilist elements, shawl barons and *Jagirdars* had assumed the role of their leaders. The local trading class had been cornered by the non-Kashmiri traders who had established their hold with the opening of road link with Punjab directly. They were highly aggrieved. *Jagirdar* elements were advocating the cause of peasants. They were pleading for proprietary rights for them which could allow peasants the right of sale and mortgage for their small holdings. This was done with the intention of purchasing the land of poor farmers which subsequently proved correct. These leaders representing such interest

presented a Memorandum to the Viceroy, Lord Reading in 1924. The Memorandum was drafted under the guidance of the British Resident in Kashmir.¹² The Memorandum did not carry anything about the miserable lot of the artisans. The shawl barons could not favour them for that would be at their own cost.

The educated Muslim young men who had only made a beginning, were enthusiastic and ambitious for seeking attractive careers as Government Officers. But there was tough competition from the Hindu job seekers. They had thus to struggle hard. This, invariably, brought the Muslim educated class together. They organised themselves under the shelter of a Reading Room in April, 1930 and were called the Reading Room Party. This party functioned under a committee of which Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was elected as General Secretary. So says Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah: "Reading Room was actually a cover under which, we met and exchanged views. We used to discuss our personal and employment problems besides the problems of the country¹³." This small group of young men could not muster strength unless the *maulvis* of the city, who were popular with people, would support them. They made efforts to win their sympathies and support. They succeeded in doing so. *Jagirdars* of Kashmir who played second fiddle to the Maharaja, patronised Sheikh Abdullah and he willingly fell into their trap. He was used by Muslim *Jagirdars* for collection of donations for arranging reception to the Maharaja when he had to return from Europe (in 1931) after he had attended the historic Round Table Conference. Sheikh Sahib had even agreed to become the convener of the Muslim Jagirdar Committee¹⁴ for organising such a reception.

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS EXPLOITED

The Reading Room Party, during this period, concentrated over activities confined mostly to their demands of giving appropriate representation to the Muslims in the Government. Lot many representations had been made but the Government had given a cold shoulder to their demands. This had made them desperate and they were awaiting an opportunity to strike. A golden opportunity was provided to them when a series of unfortunate events described as religious excesses, took place at Jammu.

At Jammu, a police inspector, Babu Khem Chand had objected to the reading of *Khutba* by *Maulvi* Ata Ullah, the contents of which smacked of a political motive. The Imam "spoke of Pharaoh as a cruel and tyrant king¹⁵." It was Id day, April 1931. The Muslims took it as an affront and a protest meeting was organised at Talab Khatian, Jammu city. Surprisingly, on the same day, at Dagore (Samba Tahsil), the Hindu Brahmins had stopped Muslims drawing water from a tank for performing ablutions. It made difficult for Muslims to offer *nimaz* in time. Young Mens Muslim Association Jammu, organised and held a protest meeting on 4 May. While the tempers were already surcharged, an inadvertent desecration of the Holy Quran took place on 4 June that too at Jammu. One Laba Ram, a head constable forcibly rolled the bedding of a Muslim constable, a jail guard, and threw it on a box. The Holy *Panj-Sura*, in the possession of the guard fell on the ground. This was treated as dishonour to the *Panj-Sura*. Again the episode was blown beyond proportion by the Young Mens Muslim Association, Jammu. Like the flash of a lightning, the news reached the valley, and a protest meeting was held at Jama Majid, Srinagar on June 8. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah delivered his maiden speech here.

This was the high time for the Reading Room Party to introduce themselves to the people and to give them a feeling of a new emerging political force in the valley. They, willingly, received posters prepared by Young Mens Muslim Association of Jammu. The poster was written in provocative language and appealed to the religious sentiments of the people.¹⁶ It gave a call to the Muslims to stand

up unitedly against the religious interference and organise protests, rallies, processions and strikes.

Some imperceptible hand appeared working at the back for creating a situation which could pressurize the Maharaja. Government, therefore, offered to provide an opportunity to the Muslim representatives of the state to meet His Highness the Maharaja. Jammu Muslims took no time to decide upon the names who could meet the Maharaja. But Kashmir Muslims decided to choose the representatives in a public meeting on 21st of June at *Khankha-i-Maula* over the right bank of the Jehlum at its fourth bridge. Accordingly the meeting took place on the due date and the representatives were chosen.¹⁷

Immediately after the leaders vacated the premises, the stage was captured by one Mr. Qadeer,¹⁸ who delivered a very provocative speech against the Maharaja's Government appealing to the religious sentiments of the sensitive people referring to the desecration of Holy Quran at Jammu. Qadeer was a non-Kashmiri agent provocateur masquerading as a waiter with an English Major who had come from Peshawar and lived in a houseboat. The Government arrested him and put him on trial for sedition. The trial was first conducted in Srinagar Court and then shifted to Central Jail. The change had been ordered in the interest of law and order as the crowd attending the trial swelled after every hearing.

On the first hearing at the Central Jail on 13, July, 1931, despite Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's apparent instructions leaders like Sayyid Maqbool Bahqi, Mohi-ud-Din Andrabi and Mohammad Yehya Rafiqi directed the people to assemble at the jail premises.¹⁹ Central Jail at Srinagar, is located at the foothill of Hari Parbat Fort and is flanked by areas either side by slums, clustered with the dwellings of the artisans classes of Kashmir. So thousands of people mostly poverty stricken artisans assembled at the Central Jail, perhaps expecting deliverance from the movement. When the counsel for Qadeer arrived, a section of the people forced their way into the jail along with him. Though on the advice of the counsel the people vacated the premises, yet the authorities having become panicky informed the Governor who arrived on spot along with armed police and arrested the ring leaders. The provocation came from either side and the police opened fire on defence less people. Twenty one people fell to the bullets.²⁰ The dead were carried on cots and taken in a procession through the main business centre of the city, Maharaj Gunj. Non-Kashmiri Hindu traders allegedly provoked the processionists²¹ which resulted in loot and arson at Maharaj Gunj. At the same time such looting and arson took place in a suburb of Srinagar city (Vichar Nag). Kashmiri Hindus had to face the brunt without any provocation. Was it all stage managed?

AN IRONY

The attack on Central Jail on July 13, 1931, is of great importance in the history of Freedom Movement in Jammu and Kashmir State. But it is an irony that this attack on Central Jail is being compared with the attack of the Tiers Estate (Third Estate) on the Bastille during the French Revolution. In Paris at Bastille it was an attack against a formidable combine of the church and the landed aristocracy headed by the king. On the other hand, here in Kashmir this Movement was lead by *Maulvis, Jagirdars*, shawl barons and some ambitious young men, who were seeking Government jobs. They were loyal to Maharaja who symbolised the worst form of feudal exploitation and under whose grinding mill the emaciated, poverty stricken artisans were being crushed. Their loyalty to the Maharaja had been openly confessed by them in the Memorial²² which these leaders presented to the Maharaja on 19 October, 1931. The following lines found prominent place in its introduction:

"We acknowledge with gratitude that your Highness and your Highness's ancestors have enacted some good laws for the state and have effected certain praiseworthy improvements and we are convinced that Your Highness and Your Highness's ancestors have been inspired by sincere love and solicitude for its state subjects²³."

Was this the Bastille spirit? In France the king was executed. Here the leaders were loyal to him. This, however, does not mean that the precious lives lost in the jail episode were not the poor economic sufferers who had fought with sole intention of seeking riddance from the age old system of economic exploitation. They were the artisans of Kashmir—*Shalbafs*, *Kalbafs*, embroiderers and papier-mache designers. Their tremendous sacrifices did unleash the Bastille spirit after a few years when the movement set the goal of revolutionary change as its objective and laid what is called the New Kashmir programme as its ideal. This programme carried a Workers Charter, a Peasants Charter and a Women's Charter. It advocated for human dignity, fundamental rights and a system without exploitation. The movement around 1931 did not represent peasantry. It was urban in nature. Artisans of the city of Srinagar and other towns did form its vanguard. "Motor drivers, carpet weavers, embroiderers, silk factory workers and Tanga drivers provided the actual cadre²⁴."

The Bastille spirit could have been achieved much earlier had not the leadership staggered their feet. On 24 September, the people of the city of Srinagar as well as from nearby suburbs rallied armed with all sorts of crude weapons—swords, axes, knives, scythes, hoes, harpoons and even sticks. The weapon which, generally the rallierists carried, was the *narchoo* and was as such, given the name of *narchoo paltan*. Even Sayyid Mirak Shah Kashani came out of seclusion from Shalimar and marched on horseback brandishing his naked sword. About 60,000²⁶ people assembled at Dastgir Chowk, Khanyar, Srinagar. What was expected to ensue was a bloody battle with the forces of the Maharaja who were armed to the teeth. People were in a mood to make sacrifices. They had already suffered the rigours of 19 L²⁷. Both the leaders and the Government were unnerved. What followed was, that the henchmen²⁸ of the Maharaja involved the panicky leaders in negotiations. The leaders made a demand that the Maharaja should grant them an interview. The request was granted, and 3 p.m., that day, was fixed as the time for interview.

Maharaja Hari Singh was by temper a little haughty. He made them wait at least for two hours and then came out with a loaded pistol in his hand. He addressed the leaders in chaste Kashmiri thus:

"Have you started a revolt? Do you want to start a war against my Government? Listen! If I wish, I can skin you alive right now in my presence and there is no one to prevent me or ask for my explanation. But as I had proclaimed at the time of accession that justice is my religion, therefore, in deference to my commitment, I forgive you... such persons as are instigating a rebellion against my Government will receive such exemplary punishment that no one shall thereafter have the courage to raise his finger²⁹."

The so called leaders, then returned like crawling creatures. They did not have the courage to speak the truth to the impatient people in ferment and instead advised them to disperse peacefully. They told them that Maharaja Sahib had promised to look into their grievances. It was a betrayal, pure and simple. Earlier also they had backed out. On August 26, 1931, they had entered into a shameless understanding with the Government called the Temporary Truce.³⁰ According to this truce, the leaders had undertaken not to deliver speeches against the Government in return for their release from the jail. They had sought such a release even from the Hari Parbat Fort on August 1, 1931 with the condition that they would not do any thing that would cause law and order problem.

The call for this militant demonstration is said to have been given by *Maulvi Yusuf Shah*.³¹ But in fact it was not so. It was all spontaneous.³² Whatever it might have been, the leadership after having seen people's potential shaping beyond their expectations, had felt upset. They were not ready to use this potential for basic institutional changes which could lead to the end of a system of economic and political exploitation. These leaders belonged to a particular social strata and could not, therefore, plan

to liquidate the very institutions which had lent existence to the *social milieu* to which they themselves belonged. They aspired for better positions, social recognition and more gains in their economic undertakings. With this motive, they used the people of Kashmir, notwithstanding the fact that some of them continued their struggle for constitutional reform of the type which could help only urban middle class and in no case the poor artisans of Kashmir who had made tremendous sacrifices in 1865, 1924 and 1931, especially on 13 July in the same year.

In fact an examination of the Memorial, which was presented to the Maharaja by the leaders of this movement in August 1931 about the jail episode, shows that they were at pains to prove their loyalty to the Maharaja. They had provided about half a dozen proofs to show how the Muslim subjects had been faithful to him. Even Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was a signatory to the Memorial.³³ The Memorial "contained more or less a series of accusations levelled against Hindu subjects, Hindu officials and the Prime Minister³⁴."

Ironically, credit goes to a non-Kashmiri Indian, Sir Albion Banerji, Foreign and Political Minister of the State to defy the autocratic Government by resigning his post as a protest and presenting the genuine case of the poverty stricken people of the state. In a statement on 15 May 1929, he declared:

"Jammu and Kashmir state labouring under many disadvantages, with a large Mohammadan population absolutely illiterate, labouring under poor and very low economic conditions of living in the village and practically governed like dumb driven cattle... there is hardly any public opinion in the state³⁵."

Whatever the motivation³⁶ behind his resignation, he had pointed towards the broader issues of the problem facing the people of Kashmir. The leaders also had realized their shortcomings and had therefore changed their approach to the issues involved. We find traces of such an approach in their October Memorial which advocates for fundamental rights, constitution of legislature and executive, local self Government and judiciary. It was interesting to note that the Memorial contained nothing about the proprietary rights of the peasantry, though its place was relegated to an annexure enclosed to the Memorial. About the problems of artisans, who formed the vanguard of the movement and had shed blood for their leaders, nothing figured in the memorandum in the manner it was done in case of the educated unemployed young men.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION 1929-33

The years before 1929 formed the period of economic boom throughout the world. This coupled with Maharaja Hari Singh's progressive policies and the opening of new transport and communication links with British India, strengthened trade and commerce activities in Kashmir. It led to remunerative market for the handicrafts of Kashmir, in India and abroad. Carpets, wood carved items of furniture and decoration, papier-mache articles and furs were exported in large quantities³⁷. *Namda*, as usual, continued to be an important item of export to America and European countries. The boom period was followed by a collapse at the Wall Street which engulfed whole world in what is called the Great Depression of 1929-33. It led to the fall in prices and subsequently to the fall in savings and investment. There was all round downward trend including fall in the incomes of the people.

The Depression unhinged the carpet industry. But due to the Government subsidy for exporting carpets continued to sustain it with credit. The rate of subsidy was 3.5 *annas* per square foot for superior carpets and 2 *annas* for inferior carpets. This rate continued up to 1935-36. Subsequently it was reduced. The carpet manufacturers, received a total amount of Rs. 1,25,026 up to 1938 as subsidy. As a result, the export by carpet manufacturers during this period was: 1932-33 Rs.

46,785, 1933-34 Rs. 1,53,106, 1934-38 Rs. 2,30,413. Due to economic boom, the carpet industry had run as many as 825 looms in 1930, produced 8,94,000 sq feet carpets valuing Rs. 26,40,000 and employed 6,690 workers.³⁸ Besides, the effect of Great Depression was offset by the Swadeshi Movement which was reborn after Gandhiji gave the call for Civil Disobedience and boycott of foreign goods in 1930. A wave of making bonfire of foreign goods gripped the country. The *khadi* movement got encouragement. The position of the carpet industry between 1931 and 1936 was as under³⁹:

Year	No. of Looms	Volume of production in sq. feet	Volume of Production in Rs.
1931	100	1,20,000	3,00,000
1932	100	20,000	3,00,000
1933	250	3,00,000	7,50,000
1934	300	3,00,000	7,50,000
1935	300	3,60,000	10,80,000
1936	315	3,78,000	11,39,000

ALL-INDIA SPINNERS ASSOCIATION

A branch of All-India Spinners Association was opened in Kashmir during 1928. It started with an initial investment of Rs. 50,000. The investment rose to Rs. 1,00,000 and 1,50,000 in the year 1933 and 1934 respectively. Kashmir Government granted it a loan of Rs. 1,00,000. To this was added a seasonal loan of Rs. 1,00,000 which was granted to it in 1941 by the Association's Head office at Warda. Its production and training centre was started in 1930 at Pampore. The association's spinning and weaving centres were established at Shopiyan and Sopore in 1934, at Kulgam in 1936 and at Baramulla, Hundwara, Kupwara, Bandipore, Soibug and Duru in 1940. The total number of such centres had finally increased to 4,607. In 1936 the Association was given the facility of showroom at Nawab Bazaar. Seasonal Depots at Phalgam and Gulmarg were opened in 1933. The establishment of such an elaborate network of branches throughout the length and breadth of the valley, changed the whole scenario for the handloom industry in Kashmir.

Total value of *khadi* produced in 1940, was about Rs.2,15,605 out of which woollens alone amounted to Rs. 2,00,000. The labour engaged in the woollen industry in 1934 was as follows⁴⁰:

Woollen hand looms	...	29,144	Persons
<i>Pashmina</i>	...	1,000	Persons
Spinners of Wool	...	87,432	Persons
Spinners of <i>Pashm</i>	...	3,000	Persons
Weavers and workers in woollen Industry	...	58,288	(Two per loom)
Weavers and helpers in <i>pashmina</i> industry	...	750	Persons

The wages distributed in the same year were spinners, Rs. 1,28,591, weavers Rs. 37,882 and other artisans Rs. 37,286.

INSTITUTION OF HAWKING

A new institution of selling handicrafts throughout the country had developed during the 30's of this century. It was selling through hawkers. Due to the establishment of two road links, it had become possible for individual hawkers to go out of Kashmir during winter months and

hawk the elegant handicrafts at the doorsteps of the rich and middle class households in the cities of the Punjab, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Bangalore and Delhi. Feeling encouraged by good profit they made, they repeated the performance the following year. Such a method of selling had broken the monopoly of rich *karkhandars*. This system encouraged the artisans for it would fetch them good price. The greatest achievement of this unique institution was that the artisans had not necessarily to depend on the *khwaja* who exploited them. They had not to act as bonded labourers to the rich *karkhandars* who would give them wages at their will. The artisans of Kashmir could have been ruined during these years of Great Depression had not the Swadeshi Movement and the institution of hawking come to their rescue.

GLANCY COMMISSION

Though the leaders had vested interest, yet the sacrifices of the people could not go in vain. They were in angry mood and things could erupt again. The Maharaja then, under the pressure of the Resident, appointed a Commission under B.J. Glancy, a man from the Political Department, to look into the grievances of the Muslims. It was 11 November 1931. He submitted his report on 10 April 1932 when Raja Harikrishan Kaul had already handed over to Col. Colvin. The orders on the recommendations contained in the Glancy Commission Report were issued accordingly.⁴¹

Among many recommendations made by the Glancy Commission, the grant of proprietary rights to the landholders including *chakdars*, due consideration to the employment of Muslim young men in Government service, encouragement of industries for creating employment opportunities, abolition of certain vexatious taxes and above all, the setting up of a Legislative Assembly with restricted and communal franchise, were the important ones. The Glancy Commission Report contained nothing which could help the artisans of Kashmir. All the recommendations were accepted by the Government.

CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Reading Room Party which had started agitating primarily for the job opportunities of the educated Muslim youth had slowly begun to realize the shortcomings of the objectives of their Movement. The leaders of the party who had by then become the part of the Muslim Conference, advocated for the establishment of constitutional Government. They gave a call for civil disobedience in March, 1933. The Government resorted to repressive measures. The brunt was again borne by the people in urban areas, majority of whom were the poor artisans and other workers. As a result, the Maharaja had to give in and a Legislative Assembly called Praja Sabha, came into being in 1934.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Census Report*, 1921.
2. P.N.K., *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
3. Ganju, M., Ph.D., *op. cit.*, p. 57.
4. *Trade Report*, J & K, 1903-4, 1904-5, 1905-6, 1906-7 and 1913-14.
5. Keenan, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
7. He was educated in Mayo College for Princes in Ajmer. Saxena, H.L. *Tragedy in Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 88. Bamzai, P.N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 705.
8. Bhagwan Singh, *Political Conspiracies*, cited in Saxena, *Tragedy in Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*

11. Saxena, H.L., *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.
12. (i) Abdullah, Sheikh Mohammad, *Atish-i-Chinar*; Srinagar, 1986; p. 34. He says that the Memorandum was drafted and typed by a few officials in Residency.
- (ii) Hamdani, G.A. Zuhra, *A Brief History of Shah Hamdan Mosque and Mir Sayid Ali Hamdani*, Research Deptt. Library, Srinagar; p. 20
- (iii) Taseer, Rasheed, *Tarikh-i-Huryat of Kashmir*, Vol. I, Research Deptt. Library, Srinagar, p. 71.
- (iv) Khan, Ghulam Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
13. Abdullah, Sheikh Mohammad, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
15. Khan, Ghulam Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
16. Abdullah, Sheikh Mohammad, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
17. The names of the representatives were: (1) Mirwaiz *Maulvi* Yusuf Shah, (2) *Maulvi* Ahmad Ashai, (3) Aga Sayid Husain Shah Jalali, (4) Kh. Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, (5) Munshi Shihab-ud-Din, (6) Kh. Saad-ud-Din Shawl, (7) Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.
18. Qadeer was brought on the scene by Ahmadiyas who were British agents.
19. Hafiz Mohammad Ismail, *Personal Diary* (1907-50), Ghulam Hassan Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 291. Abdullah, Sheikh Mohammad, *op. cit.*, p. 88
20. Bazaz, P.N., *op. cit.*, p. 128.
21. Abdullah, Sheikh Mohammad, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
22. The Memorial submitted on 19th Oct. 1931 was signed by ten Muslim leaders. Following belonged to Kashmir:
 1. Ahmed Ullah Mirwaiz Hamdan,
 2. Mohammad Yusuf Shah, Mirwaiz,
 3. Sayyid Hassan Shah Jalali,
 4. Saad-ud-Din Shawl,
 5. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.
23. The signatories were as given above (22).
24. Raina, N.N., *op. cit.*, p. 91
25. Khan, Ghulam Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 155
26. Yusuf Saraf, Mohammad, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1980; p. 405
27. 19-L was an ordinance according to which:
 - (i) All arms were to be deposited.
 - (ii) Gathering of more than five people was prohibited.
 - (iii) All shops were to be opened by 9 a.m. on 26th September.
 - (iv) All kinds of slogan shouting was prohibited.
 - (v) Movement of people between 10 p.m. and 9 a.m. was prohibited.
 - (vi) Military officers were to be saluted by all on the roads.
 - (vii) Nobody could enter or leave the city of Srinagar without permission.
28. They were : Nawab Khusrro Jang, Sahib Zada Nur-ud-Din, Kh. Salam Shah and Brigadier Souther land. Yusuf Saraf, *Ibid.* p. 406.
29. Saraf, Md. Yusuf, *op. cit.*, p. 406.
30. Prof. Khan, Ghulam Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 53. (ii) Bazaz, P.N. *op. cit.*, p. 143, Saxena, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
31. Saraf Mhd. Yusuf, *op. cit.*, p. 405.
32. Bazaz, P.N., *op. cit.*, p.149-48.
33. Mir Waiz Hamdani, Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Ghulam Ahmed Ashai and Sayid Shah Jalali were the other signatores.
34. Khan, Ghulam Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
35. (i) Bazaz, P.N., *op. cit.*, p. 88.
- (ii) Bamzai, P.N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 707.
36. Raina, N.N., *op. cit.*, He says that Alboin Banerji was used as a tool by British Political Department for a mischief.

37. Bamzai, P.N.K., *Socio-Economic History, op. cit.*, p. 366.
38. Bhan, Dr. R.K., *Economic Survey of Woollen Industry in Kashmir*, Srinagar, 1939; p. 29.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Director Industries J & K Government. Dr. Ganju, author of *Op. cit.*, does not agree with these figures. He says, "It is difficult to see how the department calculates less than one man per loom for the Pashmina Industries, when it puts two persons per loom for the woollen cloth industries."

The Muslim Conference, which had been held in 1931, had a wide vision. It was not only a political movement but also a social and economic one. It was the first time in the history of Kashmir that a large number of people from different parts of the state had gathered together to discuss the problems of the people. The conference was held in the city of Srinagar, and it was attended by representatives from all parts of the state. The conference was a success, and it led to the formation of the Muslim Conference as a permanent organization. The conference was a landmark event in the history of Kashmir, and it marked the beginning of a new era in the life of the people. The conference was a result of the tireless struggle of the people of Kashmir for their rights and freedom. The conference was a testament to the power of the people, and it was a source of inspiration for all who were fighting for the same cause. The conference was a turning point in the history of Kashmir, and it was a moment of great significance. The conference was a symbol of the unity and strength of the people, and it was a source of pride for all who were part of it. The conference was a testament to the power of the people, and it was a source of inspiration for all who were fighting for the same cause. The conference was a turning point in the history of Kashmir, and it was a moment of great significance. The conference was a symbol of the unity and strength of the people, and it was a source of pride for all who were part of it.

Chapter VIII

SOCIALIST IDEAS PERMEATE THE VALLEY

After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, ideas of Socialism had spread like wildfire all over the world. Intellectuals, University professors and leaders in colonial and semi-colonial countries had been influenced the most. Despite the natural barriers of Pamirs and Hindukush ranges, the rumblings of the revolutionary changes in the Central Asian republics, were heard in Kashmir through refugees who trickled over the traditional trade route after having been dispossessed of their landed estates and other properties. The British Government had from the very beginning taken steps to plug all the possibilities of inflow of any revolutionary ideas directly from across the border. They were suspicious. Way back in 1919 they had directed the Kashmir Government for maintaining the vigil over the inflow of Bolshevik literature over the Central Asian Road. In fact the desperation of the British Government for seeking complete control over Gilgit had been caused due to the Russian factor. "The British intuitively felt that the communist ideas were potentially much more of a menace to their domination of the Orient than all the Tsar's armies in the past". But the flow of ideas cannot be stopped by physical barriers.

The new ideas did reach the Indian sub-continent and from there to Kashmir. No direct contact existed between the people of Soviet Union and the people of Kashmir despite geographical nearness. But mention must be made of one Kashmiri young man named Abdul Majid, who went to Tashkent in 1920 along with other Indian colleagues. They were taught gunnery and the handling of machine guns. In the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, Moscow, they received lessons on Communist ideology. Majid, after receiving training returned to India along with his Comrades. In 1922-23, he was involved in the Peshawar Conspiracy Case and then again in the Meerut Conspiracy Case in 1929-33. Persits² who examined 84 questionnaires filled by Indian emigres during their stay in Soviet Union, found only three or four with 'Communist sympathies.' Abdul Majid was one of them. He had expressed that he heartily agreed with the Communist programme.³ Abdul Majid, son of Faiz Baksh Kashmiri, lived then at Mochi Gate, Lahore. In his trial in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, this son of Kashmiri had told British authorities, "I am fully convinced that one day the proletarian revolution will surely be successful in India... We the communists are making efforts to bring about this revolution".⁴ One more Lahore based Kashmiri, Shams-ud-Din Ahmad worked for the Communist cause and played a major role in the North-Western Railway strikes in 1925. He also participated in the Communist Conference at Kanpur in 1926. Situation was so developing in Kashmir in which hundreds of young men with socialist ideas were slowly evolving.

DISILLUSIONMENT OF THE LEADERS

The Praja Sabha had been constituted in 1939 as a result of the relentless struggle of the people of

Kashmir under the leadership of the Muslim Conference. But not before long it had started betraying the symptoms of non-performance. Because of its limitations, it failed to achieve the objective of establishing a genuine Constitutional Government. The Government used this institution for placing people belonging to various religious faiths and geographical divisions, at cross-purposes. This tactic of the Government exposed it to the hilt. In fact, the compulsions and aspirations of various communities united them for a unified action for common cause in the Sabha. Leaders of the Reading Room Party, who formed the Core group of the Muslim Conference got disappointed about their demand for appointing Muslim officers instead of Hindus for seeking riddance from the poor economic dispensation of the Muslim masses. Appointment of Muslim officers had disillusioned them. They had proved worse than Hindu officers. "Imagine the bewilderment of a Muslim leader, when Muslim peasants in a village demanded the reversion of a transferred Hindu official in place of a hated Muslim. This happened not at one place and at one time, but on several occasions at many places."⁵

The Muslim Conference, which had been started with a limited vision, not keeping in tune with the emerging forces, began developing cracks as a result of the clash between forward looking young leadership on the one hand and the most backward and obscurantist elements in the party. *Mullahism* wanting to confine to its denominational shell and the forward looking young men broadening the Movement according to the compulsions of the times. In this battle of ideas the two groups traded charges and counter-charges against each other. The long trail of bickerings and condemnations led to the throwing of *Mullahism* out of the party.

The Muslim Conference, after rejecting *Mullahism* was still suffocating for want of a clear ideology. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who had swayed the Conference by his strong influence, was never open to conviction. He was not in the habit of listening to an argument. He wanted his young colleagues to obey him. But the new generation of young leaders were seething with fresh ideas of freedom and liberty and wanted to set new goals for their movement. They established a separate platform under the name of Young Men's Muslim Association for the "emancipation of all oppressed". They were anti-feudal and anti-imperialist. They preached revolutionary ideas. Mohi-ud-Din Kara and Yusuf Qureshi warned the Government with these words: "They will start an agitation similar to the French Revolution, in Kashmir". Some of these leaders were exiled for preaching sedition. In Lahore, they came into contact with Majlis-i-Ahrar. This organisation was under the influence of nationalist Muslims.

CHANGE TOWARDS RADICALISM

Initially Sheikh Sahib felt much irked with the establishment of a separate platform by the young men. The people appeared very receptive to the new ideas of these young leaders. Within a very short time their ideas gained popularity which convinced Sheikh Sahib about the genuineness of their policy. It was the beginning of the adoption of radical ideas by the Freedom Movement in Kashmir. This also gave an ideology to Sheikh Sahib to beat *Mullahism* which had by then started a vilification campaign against him.

While polarisation of political forces was taking a concrete shape, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah came into contact with the Indian National Congress leaders outside the state. After his visit to the Punjab for about four months after the Third Annual Session of the Muslim Conference, he had detailed deliberations with Dr. Saif-Ud-Din Kitchlew which had rather confirmed his conclusions arrived at by him in face of objective conditions prevailing in Kashmir. He, therefore, decided to give a practical shape to these conclusions. In a press interview at the residence of Saif-Ud-Din Kitchlew, he said, "My future programme is to work on the lines of the Indian National Congress. I intend to start an organisation of the same kind on my return home".⁶

As a sequel many events followed in quick succession. Sheikh Sahib in cooperation with Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz floated a weekly, *Kashmir Hamdard*, on 1 August, 1935. Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz was an emancipated Kashmiri intellectual. He too was instrumental in influencing the political views of Sheikh Abdullah. May 8, 1936 was observed as a 'Responsible Government Day' in which the liberal section of Kashmiri Pandits participated. The meeting held at Srinagar, was in fact presided over by Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz.⁹ In January, 1938 Sheikh Sahib met Pt. Nehru at the residence of Dr. Khan Sahib at Peshawar where he was advised to open doors of the Movement to Non-Muslims also. Subsequently on June 28, the same year the working committee of the Muslim Conference recommended to its General Council for changing the name and the constitution of the organisation as to allow all the people to become its members irrespective of their cast, creed and religion.

In the month of August 1938, the historic manifesto of National Demand¹⁰ was issued. It was signed by both Hindu and Muslim leaders. The manifesto cleared the perspective on future policy and drew the broad contours of the form and content of the struggle ahead. The last Session of the Muslim Conference was held on June 10, 1939 in which the final change over took place. This session was presided over by one of the radical leaders—Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq. So was born the new organisation—National Conference.

SECOND WORLD WAR OFFERS MIXED PACKAGE FOR THE ARTISANS

These developments of historic importance in Kashmir coincided with the outbreak of Second World War in 1939 which brought death and destruction world over. War in itself, though anti social, engaged the governments involved in war in a gigantic war effort. Whole economic activity was directed towards war industries. It increased prices. Increase in price level stimulated some industries as a result of lavish spending by armed forces on holidays especially at various tourist resorts in India. On the other hand, industries which depended on foreign countries for their raw materials and markets for their products suffered badly. The industries which produced goods helping war effort, were in great demand. So Second World War presented a mixed package to the artisans of Kashmir.

Immediately before the war, in spite of the effects of the Great Depression, carpet trade was able to keep the looms busy. The cheaper variety of carpets was in great demand. Government encouraged the industry by extending annual subsidy for further period of one year in the financial year 1938-39. During about this period a leading firm introduced several innovations by producing carpet like *gabbas* and embroidered *namdas*. Another firm popularised the medieval designs in carpet weaving and they did good business in such carpets. Previously such carpets used to be sold in the Annual Exhibition at Srinagar.

With the outbreak of war the carpet industry received a setback. "The demand for Kashmir made rugs and superior carpets showed signs of decline towards the middle of the year, 1939-40, with the result that the labour employed in the Industry decreased from an average of 2,000 to about 500¹¹." Carpets used to have good demand in foreign countries. But the war had created trade and transit difficulties. Export had almost stopped. This led to the fall in volume of trade and subsequently to unemployment. The government again came to the rescue of the industry by renewing the subsidy.

On the other hand, carpet like *gabbas* continued to make steady progress during the year, 1940-41. Improvements in designs helped it to perform well. *Gabbas* were not an item of export. So the war did not effect its production prospects. The Industry was mainly located at Anantnag. About 400 families,¹² excluding millers and middlemen, were involved in the Industry. During the year 1940-41, the value of *Gabbas* produced was estimated at Rs. 1 lakh.¹³

The *namda* industry suffered because of the increase in its cost of production. Wool being in demand for other uses, became costly. On the other hand *namdas* were not in demand for war purposes. Increase in the price of wool inflated the cost of production of *namdas*. So at the home market the product became costlier. But due to the collapse at the Wall Street, lot of labour had been released from the carpet industry which got readily adjusted in the *namda* industry. The *namda* industry had taken birth due to the stoppage of *namda* supplies from central Asia when the Leh Treaty Road had been closed. *Namdas* being locally manufactured, became a profitable trade for the investors. The total production of *namdas* in the year 1941 was between 2 to 3 lakhs¹⁴, valued at about Rs. 10,00,000.¹⁵

Swadeshi Movement had lent great momentum to the handloom industry in Kashmir and it had been sustained by All India Spinners Association whose network by now had been spread throughout the State. Handloom weaving in Kashmir was done mainly in wool and silk. Though the price of wool had increased yet it continued to show considerable improvement. It was precisely because of the great effort made by All India Spinners Association. The Association made improvement in the designs and the quality of woollen fabrics¹⁶, especially threads.

There were other organisations like the Industrial Emporium and Kashmir Home Industries who also made contributions. Major portion of handloom products was sold in the markets at Ahmedabad, Bombay and Karachi. Between the years 1941 and 43, the Department of Industries, Kashmir Government, initiated an ambitious scheme for the production of hand-spun and hand-woven *pattoos* with the idea of providing employment to unskilled labour.

Handloom silks mostly depended on home markets. The war, therefore, did not interfere with its steady growth. More so because of the innovations of certain enterprising firms during the year 1939-40. Large quantities of Georgettes were produced. They swelled the volume of trade. Silk products were in great demand in the Indian cities especially, Lahore, Amritsar and Delhi. During 1940-41, bedspreads, teapoy covers and silk saris, particularly in embroidery form were in great demand.¹⁷ Of course war did create a problem with respect to importing of dyes and chemicals. Those who already possessed the stocks, indulged in profiteering. With all these difficulties the handloom industry was considered to be the biggest cottage industry in the State during 1943.¹⁸

Embroidery is done on woollens or silks in Kashmir. It is an auxiliary of woollen and silk industries. *Amlikar* shawls had become famous all over the world because of the attractive work done on *pashmina* or *rafal*. Silk saris, teapoy covers and bedspreads were in great demand in 1941 because of the colourful designs in embroidery. Though the price of *pashmina* wool had gone up in 1942-43,¹⁹ yet the popularity of excellent embroidery motivated artisans to do more work and produce very beautiful pieces which could be acceptable even on higher cost. About 17,000 persons worked in this industry between 1940 and 1941.²⁰

Yet another attractive art of Kashmir is papier-mache. During the period of war, the number of visitors to the valley showed a marked increase due to influx of army personnel who spent their holidays in Kashmir. The papier-mache industry, therefore, made brisk sales and the total value of goods produced increased from Rs. 2 lakhs²¹ in the year 1940-41 to Rs. 2.5 lakhs²² in the year 1941-43. About 600 people were employed in the industry during the year 1940-41²³.

In spite of the rise in the price of silver the turnover of the silverware industry increased tremendously. Because of the excellent finish and workmanship of the craftsmen, the demand for silverware increased to the extent that it became difficult for the leading firms to cope with the demand with the existing work force. The industry employed 1100 workers in the year 1941-43.²⁴ On the other hand, the

brass and metal-ware industry did not do well because the prices of brass and other connected materials had increased due to war.

Wooden furniture and wood carving, a well-known cottage industry of Kashmir continued to be popular during the war. The industry was able to meet the total requirement of the entire state. The toys produced in some of the towns of Kashmir were famous for their excellent shape, finish and colour. Improvement in the designs of the toys was under the consideration of the Government at the end of 1943. Wood-carving also was popular and made brisk business at the Annual Exhibition at Srinagar and among the tourists throughout the tourist season in Kashmir.

LEFTIST ORIENTATION OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

By now the National Conference had assumed full leftist orientation in Kashmir. Inspired by the Socialist Revolution in Russia, the Communist Movement in India had taken strides. Engaged in a life and death struggle against the British colonial rule, they were also organising peasant and working class movements throughout British India. At the same time they were conscious of the fact that the people in princely states were faced with double-edged struggle—one against the autocratic regimes of the princes and the other against the British machinations to strengthen their colonial grip over these states. It was, therefore, their considered policy to guide these movements in States. In Kashmir they followed this policy through their contacts with the young radicals, some of whom had come into contact with them in the Punjab, which was in the neighbourhood of Kashmir.

With the intention of pursuing their policies, many communist leaders visited Kashmir right from 1937. Early this year, Fazal Ilahi Qurban and Prof. Abdullah Safdar visited Kashmir from Lahore.²⁵ They were followed by B.P.L. Bedi and his European wife Freida Bedi. Both of them were communist leaders. A veteran communist leader P.C. Joshi visited Kashmir in 1939.²⁶ Even Dr. K.M. Ashraf, one of the secretaries of Indian National Congress, having Marxist views, visited Kashmir those days. These leaders guided and advised not only their comrades, but also influenced Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. In fact, B.P.L. Bedi and his wife developed personal friendship with Sheikh Abdullah. Their visits had contributed towards changing the whole political perspective of the National Movement in Kashmir.

The young radical leaders of the National Conference, had fully adopted the Marxian ideology. G.M. Sadiq had no hesitation in participating openly in the annual session of the Communist sponsored All India Students Federation at Patna as a special invitee.²⁷ But they were advised by the Communist Party of India to work within the National Conference. The National Conference had grown into an unparalleled mass organisation and communists could influence the course of events effectively by working inside the organisation. Such a policy had been sufficiently vindicated when they had continued to stay within the Muslim Conference during its last days. They were instrumental in changing the content and the form of the policies of the Muslim Conference which had ultimately led to the change in its name. It had been made demonstratively clear when G.M. Sadiq had addressed its special Session on June 10, 1939. Like a communist, he had declared that the movement in Kashmir was a part of the world revolution. It was a follow-up of a revolutionary era which had transformed the fate of big countries like France and Russia.²⁸ Communists in the beginning of 1942 had started New Kashmir Book Stall at Srinagar which sold communist literature and publications of the Communist Party of India including its official organ *Peoples War*. By 1945, 40 copies of *Peoples' War* were sold. The weekly newspaper, *Azad* also was started which gave a progressive and leftist analysis of the political problems in the State and the country. They had started to enlist communist cadres both as members and sympathisers. This was all done very cautiously for they continued to be inside the National Conference. Com. N.N. Raina, later on the Head of Department of Physics, University of

Kashmir, provided his matured and able leadership to communists. Many young men, highly intelligent and inspired by the Marxian thought, had joined the Communist ranks. Some of these young cadres had earlier visualised fighting the freedom struggle in the manner Sardar Bhagat Singh and his associates had been fighting in British India. They were aspiring and actively attempting to prepare a bomb which they could not. Subsequently they were enlisted as communists after receiving the Marxist education. The leader of this group was Com. Pran Nath Jalali. Much earlier, there was a serious group of young men working on similar lines. They pursued their activities under the signboard of Indian National Congress. This group was led by Pt. Radhey Nath Jalali."

The opponents of the Communist movement, getting jealous of the influence of the Communists, organised an association, called India First Club in 1942, to disrupt their movement. This Club propagated anti-Communist ideas and let loose a campaign of slanders against communists, who by then were well organised. They formed a broad-based students organisation called Anti-Fascist Students Front. Communists also worked in Trade Union Organisations and helped the workers in their struggles for achieving their demands.

The Indian Communist movement had such a strong grip over the leadership of the National Conference, that on a very vital issue of the qualitative change, which the character of war was supposed to have taken after the Fascist Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, the National Conference Working Committee issued a statement on this controversial issue. The working Committee had deliberated on 16, 17 and 18 May, 1942 in a Doonga boat, on the smooth waters of the Dal Lake and issued the following statement:

"...at this juncture of world history, it is high time that the people should realize the significance of the increasing danger to our country from the world Fascist forces. People must be roused from their apathetic attitude towards this war, which in the opinion of the Working Committee is no more purely imperialistic conflict but has changed into a peoples front of the entire world against Fascism and reaction, no matter that reaction is of home made variety or of a foreign brand²⁹."

This characterisation of the war was completely identical to the line adopted by the Communist Party of India and the World Communist Movement. It was in total opposition to the line adopted by the Indian National Congress. They did not agree to any qualitative change having taken place in the character of war after Fascist attack on Soviet Union.

ADOPTION OF NEW KASHMIR PROGRAMME

Notwithstanding the fact that the National Conference worked under the guidance of Indian National Congress, the influence of the communist movement made an impact in formulating its policies. It was, therefore, in 1944, when the Royal Commission, presided over by Justice Ganga Nath, was appointed to examine the possibility of constitutional reforms, the National Conference submitted a memorandum to it. The memorandum contained a plan for new constitutional and economic set-up having socialist orientation. It was this very memorandum which was later published as *New Kashmir*, after having been duly adopted in the Annual Session of National Conference held at Srinagar on September 29 to 30 in 1944. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah has himself admitted in his autobiography³⁰ that they had requisitioned the services of a famous progressive leader of the Punjab, B.P.L. Bedi, "Who was friendly to us", to draft this manifesto. He says that it was even typed by his highly conscious and cultured wife, Freida Bedi. According to him Marxist leaders like Ahsan Danish and Daniyal Latifi had also helped in the drafting. Actually it was way back in 1940, that Maharaja Hari Singh had desired to know the future vision of National Conference about Kashmir. Sheikh Sahib had entrusted this responsibility to G.M. Sadiq in early 1943. Sadiq Sahib in consultation with Dr. G. Adhikari, a Polit

Bureau Member of the Communist Party of India, produced a draft which was approved by Sheikh Sahib.³¹ On record, there was also a Drafting Committee. Kashmir members of the Drafting Committee included G.M. Sadiq, N.N. Raina and Moti Lal Misri.³²

The golden opportunity which the communists got in drafting *New Kashmir* programme, subsequently proved to be of great historic importance. Commitment to this programme formed the basis for the liquidation of the centuries old feudal order in Kashmir. It contained among other things the Peasants Charter³³, the Workers Charter³⁴ and the Women's Charter.³⁵ These Charters, like, the Magna Carta, laid the charter of demands on behalf of Peasants, workers and women of Kashmir. Kashmir did not possess any sweating working class but instead was inhabited by swarming artisans in perpetual poverty, though their art and craft had achieved fame and name all over the world. They were the persons who had given tremendous sacrifices for seeking riddance from the system of political and economic exploitation. The Workers Charter reads as follows:

1. Every citizen has the right to demand work from the state in accordance with his capacity of brain or hand.
2. Every citizen has right to work consistent with his honour and self-respect in a free and democratic state, which postulates the abolition of all exploitation of man by man.
3. Every working citizen has the right to higher standard of living than mere subsistence level, and this is guaranteed to him by norm of the National Plan.
4. Every worker has the right of association and expression through his own Trade Union.
5. Freedom of movement from occupation to occupation is guaranteed.
6. All dealings with the individual worker and groups of workers to be done through union representatives.
7. In cases of disputes, compulsory arbitration to be provided.
8. Every citizen worker shall be paid weekly wages.
9. Every citizen worker shall do eight hours work a day.
10. Every worker has the right to receive equal wages for equal work, without racial distinction or sex discrimination.
11. Every worker shall receive one fortnight's leave annually with pay in full and one day's holiday per week, also on full pay.
12. Every worker is entitled to insurance under the heads of sickness, old age, accident and in the case of women, maternity.
13. Every worker can give his best work to the state in the confidence that in the event of sudden death, his dependents will be provided for by a state pension scheme.
14. Every worker shall have a healthy home in a healthy locality, with light and water facilities.
15. Abolition of employment of children under the age of fifteen years is guaranteed.
16. Special protection of women worker as specified in the women's charter.
17. All recruitment of labour through Trade Unions.
18. Every worker has the right to cheap and speedy transport facilities.
19. Every worker shall have a right to free medical and nursing facilities in accordance with the National Health Plan.

20. Every worker has the right to recreation, with all cultural facilities.
21. Every worker has the right to education, not only of three R's but with special application to his own trade or profession, upto the highest point of which he is capable, through the medium of the National Educational Plan.

Even under the Women's Charter, women workers have been given protection against economic exploitation. It even recognises women's biological right to protection from heavy labour and ensures equal wages for equal work.

It was for the first time in history that a serious promise had been made to free them from the shackles of economic and cultural backwardness. These charters were based on the noble principles of equality and liberty. The charters advocated abolishing of the institutions of social parasitism. Achievement of these goals would mean launching a consistent struggle against the existing system. The revolutionary programme of *New Kashmir*, which contained these charters, was adopted by National Conference in their Annual Session which sent its salutations to Red Army for their victory over Fascist Germany.³⁶ The communist influence was visible.

QUIT KASHMIR MOVEMENT

War had come to an end. Fascism had been defeated. The war-ravaged Britain had brought the Labour Party into power and they wanted to settle the question of granting independence to India. Various missions were sent to India to work out a detailed constitutional formula on the basis of which power could be transferred to British India and 565 princely States. For British India, they had to settle issues between Indian National Congress and Muslim League. In case of princely states they thought of handing over power according to the treaty obligations with respective states. When Cabinet Mission visited Kashmir in March 1946, Sheikh Abdullah, who was the President of National Conference and the Vice-president of All India States Peoples Conference submitted a Memorandum to them : The Memorandum contained following lines:

"...At this moment the future of the inhabitants of India is on the anvil and the constitutional pattern of the future is being hammered out by the British Cabinet Mission. The question of the treaty rights of the princes has become a moot point between the people of the States, the princely order and the paramount power. For us in Kashmir, the re-examination of this relationship in its historical context is a vital matter." It further said, "Nearly 100 years ago, the people of Kashmir became the victims of a commercial deal by the covetous agents of the East India company. For the paltry consideration of Rs. 75 lakh of Sikh currency rupees (less than half a million pound sterling) the people of Kashmir, the land and its potential wealth, were sold away to Maharaja Gulab Singh, the Dogra vassal of the Sikh kingdom.

We challenge the moral and political validity of this Sale Deed, to which people of Kashmir were never a party and which has since 1946, been the document of their bondage³⁷."

After making their position clear in this memorandum, the National Conference launched an agitation called *Quit Kashmir*. This movement challenged the Treaty of Amritsar and demanded that the rule of the Dogra House be vacated from the Jammu and Kashmir State. Even Gandhi ji who visited Kashmir during the days of agitation declared the Treaty of Amritsar as a sale deed.³⁸ The demand was most logical. The people of Kashmir, had after all, risen to redeem their freedom and honour. The essence of the demand, in fact, was to seek the liquidation of the centuries' old feudal order and all institutions which lent credence to the perpetual economic deprivation of the multitudes of artisans and craftsmen who swarmed the squalid and backward slums of the city of Srinagar and other towns. Maharaja Hari Singh presided over this kind

of dispensation in Kashmir. It was not his fault. The system had been bequeathed to him from his ancestors — Dogras, Sikhs, Afgans, Mughals, Muslim Sultans and ancient Hindu kings. His only tragedy was that he was a wrong man at a wrong time. Anybody placed in his shoes could have faced the wrath of the people.

Meanwhile the Britishers transferred power to divided India. The sovereignty of the princes was upheld and they were asked to sign the Instrument of Accession either with India or Pakistan. While the Maharaja of Kashmir was still undecided about the accession, Pakistan sent tribal raiders to occupy Kashmir by force. His small force fought a gallant battle, but ultimately the Maharaja had to leave Kashmir in very unhappy circumstances. He left Kashmir on 25 October 1947 and signed the Instrument of Accession on 26 Oct. Monarchy had tumbled and gone into the dustbin of history. Sheik Mohammad Abdullah was made, first, the Head of the Emergency Administration and then, the Prime Minister of Kashmir on March 5, 1948.

PARTITION CREATES PROBLEMS FOR ART & CRAFT INDUSTRY

Sheikh Sahib's administration was faced with gigantic problems. Besides delivering the multitude of poor peasantry from age-old feudal system and drawing long term policy planning for the development of artisan industries, he was faced with immediate crisis created in these industries due to the partition of the country. Many skilled carpet weavers had left the valley and settled in Pakistan. This was the case with other master-craftsmen also having an inkling of the partition of the country. K.C. Hadow had sold his carpet factory way back in 1945. Even Messrs. Mitchell³⁹ and Co. sold the factory to an Indian counterpart. These foreign investors had lot of expertise and experience in carpet manufacture and by their departure from Kashmir the industry had received a serious setback. The disturbed conditions in the Indian subcontinent and the tribal raid on Kashmir had brought tourist traffic to a virtual stop. Also the Jhelum Valley Road, a reliable trade route, had been closed due to the creation of Pakistan. This had created serious marketing problems for the beautiful products of the artisans. So the production of Arts and Crafts of Kashmir had substantially fallen. They were suffering due to the fall in their earnings.

COMMUNISTS MAKE SUGGESTIONS

Even as Sheikh Sahib was inducted as the Head of the Emergency Administration the communists within the National Conference made various proposals in the form of an open letter to Sheikh Sahib which among other things contained suggestions about the agrarian reforms and the policy to be followed about the Handicrafts of Kashmir. These suggestions were⁴⁰:

"Workers will be encouraged to form Industrial cooperatives on the following principles:

- (i) Share capital to be held by each individual member within the range of Re. 1 to Rs. 200;
- (ii) such individual member will have only one vote irrespective of the total value of the shares he holds;
- (iii) no individual shareholder is to hold more than 20% of the total share capital;
- (iv) each individual cooperative will be responsible to work out a proper division of labour amongst its members, and to distribute its net profits accordingly. The profit distribution will be primarily based on the work done by each member and only in the second place on the capital investment of each;
- (v) the *wosta* (master craftsman) will no longer be responsible for the supply of capital and raw-materials, and will no longer take hold of finished goods for sale in the market. He will be employed by the cooperative on a fixed remuneration or on commission basis;

- (vi) the Government will support the cooperative through:
 - (a) subsidies or loans for the purpose of raw materials and implements of production;
 - (b) concessional freight rates will be provided;
 - (d) organisation of cooperative marketing will be encouraged."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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3. Warkoo K., *Link*, Feb. 1986, p. 26.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
5. Bazaz, P.N. *op. cit.*, p. 187.
6. Makhdoomi, Pir Mohammad Afzal, *The History of Freedom Struggle*, cited *Weekly Aina*, August 7, 1973, p. 5.
7. *Ibid.*, 7th May 1973, p. 6.
8. Saxena H.L., *op. cit.*, p. 327.
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10. Out of twelve leaders, five were Kashmiri Pandits.
11. *Administration Report*, 1939-40, p. 115.
12. *Ibid.*, 1940-41, p. 111.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *The Tribune, Lahore, Namda Industry in Kashmir*, August 27, 1941.
15. Ganju, M (Ph.D), *op. cit.*, p. 144.
16. *Administration Report*, 1940-41. p. 111.
17. *Ibid.*, 1940-41. p. 111.
18. *Ibid.*, 1941-43. p. 117.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, 1940-41, p. 112.
22. *Ibid.*, 1941-43, p. 118.
23. *Ibid.*, 1941-41, p. 112.
24. *Ibid.*, 1941-43, p. 118.
25. Saxena H.L., *op. cit.*, p. 397.
26. Saraf, Mohd. Yusuf, *Kashmiris Fight For Freedom*, Vol. I, p. 65.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Khan, Ghulam Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 376.
29. *Our Path to the Freedom and New Kashmir*, issued and published by the Secretariat of The Annual Session, 1945 of the National Conference, p. 13.
30. Sheikh Mohd., Abdullah, *op. cit.*, p. 371
31. Raina, N.N. *Kashmir Politics and Imperialist Manoeuvres*, p. 120.
32. The author has in his possession a recorded interview of Moti Lal Misri on Radio Kashmir in which he says that he was one of the members of the Drafting Committee of *New Kashmir*. This fact was also revealed by Dr. Naseer and his brother Shamji in their condolence speeches on the death of Moti Lal Misri. They claimed that they possessed the signed draft of *New Kashmir*.
33. Laid in New Kashmir Programme.
34. cited in New Kashmir Programme.
35. Laid in New Kashmir Programme.

36. Raina, N.N., *op. cit.*, p. 128.
37. Saxena H.L., *op. cit.*, p. 442.
38. Abdullah, Sheikh Mohd. *op. cit.*, p. 385.
39. K.C. Hadow was the son of C.M. Hadow.
40. Raina, N.N., *op. cit.*, pp. 157-58.

Chapter IX

ON THE PATH OF PROGRESS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE REDEEMS ITS PLEDGE

The National Conference, which had fought the freedom struggle under the towering leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, had to redeem its pledge to the poverty-stricken millions, 96 percent of whom were peasants. The artisans and the workers, mostly located in towns formed the vanguard of this struggle and had made tremendous sacrifices. Sheikh Sahib was now, in power and was bound to implement the *New Kashmir* programme which had set the economic, political and cultural goals of the Freedom Movement. So the die was cast. It was in his first broadcast from Jammu, as the Chief Administrator of Jammu and Kashmir State, that he made an announcement of following decisions of his Government:

- (i) abolition of *jagirdari*,
- (ii) resumption of *mukarraries*,
- (iii) grant of waste lands,
- (iv) moratorium on non-commercial debts,
- (v) stay on ejectments, and
- (vi) the association of Tehsil and District Councils for supervising the execution of Government orders.

The *jagirdari* system was completely done away with under two orders; cabinet order of May 25, 1948¹ and of March 10, 1951². All *mukarraries* and *muafis* tenable during the pleasure of His Highness or held in perpetuity or during the lifetime of a *muafidar* or Mukarrari holders or held in lieu of some specific service were resumed. All the rights and privileges enjoyed by Jagindars were withdrawn. A *jagir* was a state within a state. So many were the powers and privileges of a *jagirdar*. He had the right of even shooting. All ejections of tenants were stopped by means of an ordinance. One more ordinance was issued for staying all the suits or proceedings for the realization of debt of peasants for one year.

Land reform of farreaching importance was effected to, when the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act was passed in 1950. According to this Act, a ceiling was placed at 22.75 acres of land beyond which a land holder could not possess any land. The surplus land was transferred to the tillers holding it to the extent of their actual cultivating occupation on 17 October, 1950. But no tiller could own more than 20 acres (160 kanals). More important part of this reform was that land to the tillers was transferred without any compensation. It was a revolutionary change which had not taken place any where in rest of the country. In fact when W.R. Lawrence, the father of land and revenue settlement in Kashmir, came in the last quarter of the 19th century, he described the condition of the peasantry, 'infinitely worse than the Tiers Etate (Third Estate) before the French Revolution. In

France the change was brought about by a bloody revolution while in Kashmir it was a change brought by a stroke of pen. Not only the chronic feudal system was liquidated but also the Monarchy that too without shedding a drop of blood.

Structural changes of major dimensions had taken place in Kashmiri society. Up to the early Thirties of the present century, the king used to be the owner of all lands and on his behalf it used to be managed by *jagirdars* and big land holders who on their part tenanted it to the peasant tillers against poor living. But suddenly, the tiller was the master of the land. There was no landlord-tenant relationship. There were no *jagirdars*, no king; the whole land relation had changed.

But it is interesting to note that such a revolutionary structural change was not brought in the artisan industries in Kashmir. In all the artisan industries, even today, there exists a most hateful system based on feudal relationship. At the top there is the *khowaja* (the investor), at the middle, the *vostakar* (the master-craftsman) and at the bottom, the artisans. The *khowja*, provides the material and other resources for running a 'Chathal' (the work place) where the *vostakar* employs artisans for doing the work. Wages to the artisans are paid by the *khowaja* through the *vostakar* at a previously fixed rate. The *vostakar* has separate contractual terms with the *khowaja* in which he gets some extra crumbs from him. The attitude of the *khowaja* is arrogant and exploitative towards the artisans. Often he offers advances to the needy artisans for a social or a religious function and then, they are ever kept under his bondage.

EXPERIMENT OF INDUSTRIAL COOPERATIVES

When the new Government took over, their priority was to free the artisans from the tragic state of affairs as obtained at the dawn of freedom. In the financial year 1948-49, a special plan of Industrial cooperatives was visualized on the lines of great experiment in China¹ as also promised in the *New Kashmir* programme. The proposal with a long term perspective could not be introduced all at once. Old system, they felt, could not be abolished forthwith. It required lot of study followed by a detailed planning. Lot of experience and resources required to be mobilised. Though number of Industrial Cooperatives increased day after day but these could not altogether replace the traditional system though it weakened the hold of *Khowja* and his monopoly over a particular craft. In an era where there was acute shortage of finances, to discourage private entrepreneurs from investing in a particular trade, could not have been a wise policy. What was needed was to provide alternative opportunities to the artisans to save them from the tyranny of the *Khowja* who treated them like slaves. An artisan deserved to be as free as possible with proper security to his job and a good standard of living for being as much creative as he could be. He was essentially an artist and he never deserved to be dictated. A cooperative in which the will of the artisans could become a strong motivational force and in which, there could be least Government interference and red-tape, could have been an ideal solution. Unfortunately, there was lot of red-tape, government interference and corruption prevalent in such cooperatives. At the same time it was a move in the right direction.

IMMEDIATE RELIEF

The experiment of Industrial Cooperatives being a long term proposal, the Government was also at pains to give immediate relief to the artisans. The industries were almost stagnating for want of a wide market for their goods. Partition of the country and the invasion of Kashmir by Pakistan had caused economic destabilisation. Tourist market was totally lost. The Government, therefore, decided to open a net-work of emporia in the capital cities of India where the arts and crafts of Kashmir could be displayed and marketed. A beginning was made in the year 1948-49 when a number of trade emporia

were set up in Delhi, Simla and Bombay besides Srinagar. Although these emporia had not been made functional on proper lines, yet the business to the extent of Rs. 9 lakhs was transacted.⁴ The control over these emporia was exercised, initially, by the Kashmir Traders Union under the patronage of the Government, but later in 1949-50 the Government took the direct control.⁵ In order to help the artisan industries, the Government purchased goods worth Rs. 1,94,544 for these emporia and the rates were fixed by negotiations with the presidents of the various sections of the Kashmir Traders Union.⁶ The goods purchased by the Government were Furnishings; Carpets, *Gabbas*, *Namdass* and Chain Stitch rugs; Woollens, *Pashmina* and Shawls; Embroidery and Silk; Wood carving and Papier-mache. Goods like silver-ware, jewellery, furs and willow-work were kept with these emporia on consignment basis. The cost of goods purchased and kept on consignment basis at these emporia is detailed below.⁷

Total cost of goods purchased including the goods purchased from the union.	:	Rs. 5,84,488
Total cost of goods received on consignment basis	:	Rs. 4,61,240

The initial response to these emporia was highly encouraging. The details of sales made at these emporia during the year 1949-50 were as follows.⁸

S.No.	Branches	Own Stocks	Consignment Stocks
1.	Srinagar Emporium	Rs. 29,413	Rs. 29,137
2.	Bombay Emporium	Rs. 97,798	Rs. 32,502
3.	Delhi Emporium	Rs. 2,06,392	Rs. 1,18,036
4.	Simla Emporium	Rs. 8,678	Rs. 2,184
	Total	Rs. 3,42,281	Rs. 1,91,859

The overall sales from both the stocks were to the tune of Rs. 5,34,140. These sales at that time were not of a mean order and gave great boost to the artisan industries in Kashmir. The Government had placed Rs. 7 lakhs at the disposal of various emporia. Rs. 5 lakhs were drawn by the Government out of this amount to meet part of the expenditure for purchasing goods. A net profit of Rs. 13,000 was made during this year.⁹

By early 1953, the number of emporia had increased to ten. The new emporia had been set up in Jammu, Amritsar, Bangalore, Madras, Calcutta and Lucknow.¹⁰ In addition to these emporia two agencies were opened at Dehra Dun and Jullundar. Increased number of emporia and agencies provided more openings for exploiting the markets in the important trade centres of India. The experiment did succeed in a big way. The sale at the Srinagar Emporium increased substantially because of the influx of increased number of tourists in the early part of 1953. This had generated enthusiasm among the artisans giving plentyfull of confidence and hope for future. But not before too long, Kashmir was once again caught in a political crisis of serious nature.

THE SHEIKH DEFLECTS

The implementation of the revolutionary land reforms in Kashmir was the greatest achievement of Sheikh Abdullah's Government. But at the same time it proved to be its bane. In fact the reforms could not have taken place so quickly had Pakistan not invaded Kashmir. The unusual situation created,

catapulted the National Conference to power. Normal process of transfer of power to people could have taken longer time. As the things were, National Conference was provided a golden opportunity to redeem its pledge to the people and prove the correctness of their decision to accede to Indian Union where these reforms could be sustained.

The landed aristocracy in India suspected that the infection might spread like a canker. The landlords and *jagirdars* shared power in states and at the centre. The landed interests, inside the state made a common cause with their allies outside. A lot of criticism against these reforms appeared in a part of the Indian Press. The representatives of the *jagirdars* and landlords met the Union Home Minister, Sardar Patel. His attitude towards these reforms was negative. In fact, to elude Sardar Patel's covert moves, Sheikh Sahib made an open declaration of these reforms on 13 July, 1950 when the Land Reforms Committee had not as yet submitted its recommendations. Nehru and Azad supported these reforms.

Within Jammu and Kashmir State Land-lords and *jagirdars* put up a stiff resistance. In Kashmir Division, opposition to reforms confined to the fight through courts, carrying of deputations and submitting memoranda etc. But in Jammu Division the opposition to reforms took a political turn. The Praja Parishad Movement was overtly and covertly financed by *ex-jagirdars* and landlords. They gave a patriotic cover to their movement. In essence it was a class conflict to which they gave a communal colour. The main slogan of the movement was, *Ek Vidhan*. By inference it meant the application of Indian constitution in toto and scuttling of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. This Article gave Kashmir the right of framing its own constitution. Supreme Court of India could not interfere. Unfortunately the strong lobby having landed interest both in the States and at Centre supported Praja Parishad Movement. It had corresponding repercussion in Kashmir valley.

Jagirdars and landlords across the cease-fire line had become nervous due to these reforms. Sheikh Shib had given a call to the people belonging to that area to rise in a revolt against their masters who exploited them. They, therefore intensified their vilification campaign against this great man and made common cause with the Government of Pakistan who were after his blood.

Sheikh Sahib was placed in a precarious situation—between the deep sea and the devil. He thought that there were enemies all round. He could not properly evaluate the strength of the patriotic forces in the country and his friends in the Indian National Congress. He, therefore deflected from his course. He toyed with the idea of independent Kashmir about which he also made a proposal in the working committee of the National Conference.¹¹ It led to a serious crisis within National Conference and ultimately the arrest of Sheikh Sahib on August 9, 1953.

The new Government was headed by his confidant, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad. Bakhshi Shib left no stone unturned to prove himself worthy of facing the new challenges. He started with giving many sops to the poor people of Kashmir. As long term economic policy he followed the economic planning process being implemented in rest of the country. In formulating Five Year Plans, he had the support of veteran leader's like G.M. Sadiq and D.P. Dhar.

STEPS TO AUGMENT SALES

In order to give fillip to artisan industries, he managed to invite a party from the Central Cottage Industries Emporium, Delhi, in the beginning of the month of October. They had detailed discussions with the officials of the Srinagar Emporium. Under their guidance the party effected purchases direct from the craftsmen to the tune of over one lakh rupees.¹² Another party was invited from Bombay

Small Scale and Cottage Industries' Department, under the leadership of Mrs. Jayakar. In her discussions with the officials of the Srinagar Emporium, she was appreciative of the creative faculties of the Kashmiri craftsmen and gave some valuable suggestions for overall encouragement of the arts and crafts of Kashmir. She also made purchases direct from the artisans. The purchases were to the tune of Rs. 30,000.¹³

As a matter of policy, the new Government directed all the arts emporia in the country to participate in various industrial exhibitions to be held in different parts of the country. As a sequel, the Srinagar Arts Emporium participated in the Industrial Exhibitions held at Hyderabad, Meerut, Bombay and Aligarh. Sales worth Rs. 50,000 were made.¹⁴ The Calcutta Emporium participated in the All India Congress Committee Exhibition organised by it at Kalyani. Also, the arts and crafts of Kashmir were sent to England to be displayed for sale in the London Exhibition held on the occasion of the coronation of queen Elizabeth-II.

Steps were also taken to improve the functioning of the net-work of emporia. A conference of the managers of all the emporia and trade agencies was organised in Delhi to sort out the problems facing these emporia. Among many other things which they discussed in the conference, following problems received greater attention:

- (i) the system of requisitions and the timely supply of goods;
- (ii) the price structure;
- (iii) the position of stock accumulations and their disposal, and
- (v) the system of accounting.

Sorting out these problems and removal of bottle-necks helped a long way in expanding the sales and increasing the annual turnover of the business conducted through these emporia. In comparison with the financial year 1949-50 the increases were as follows¹⁵:

S.No.	Value of goods	1949-50	1953-54
1.	Purchased	Rs. 5,84,488	Rs. 19,17,157
2.	Received on Consignment	Rs. 4,61,240	Rs. 3,40,0234

It shows that there was substantial increase in the purchase of goods by emporia themselves than in case of accepting stocks on consignment basis. In fact there was a decline in the value of goods received on consignment basis. Sales¹⁶ through the network of various emporia in the country also showed a tremendous increase comparing to 1949-50.

S.No.	Sales from	1949-50	1953-54	Percentage increase
1.	Purchased Stocks	Rs. 3,42,281	Rs. 17,50,000	411
2.	Consigned Stocks	Rs. 1,91,859	Rs. 5,70,000	191

It shows that sales from the purchased stocks increased by 411% and from the consigned stocks by 197%. Even goods worth Rs. 50,000 were exported to foreign countries.¹⁷ The progress was, obviously significant.

With a view to provide employment and guidance to the artisans belonging to various crafts, the

Government adopted a new scheme of opening Production Centres during the year 1952-53. To start with, a fairly big *Raffal Shawl* Production Centre was opened with an initial investment of Rs. 1,00,000 and it employed about 600 workers.¹⁸

PLANNING INTRODUCED

The development of cottage industries in Kashmir, was now taking place in a planned manner. In the State's First Five Year Plan Rs. 25.50 lakhs were allotted to cottage industries which included the emporia scheme.¹⁹ During the fourth year of the First Five Year Plan, the Director Industries made a survey of the whole state and formulated the scheme of opening Demonstration-cum-Production Centres both in Jammu and Kashmir divisions. For the Kashmir Division following schemes²⁰ were sanctioned and implemented.

1. Four Demonstration-cum-Production centres for Tweed. The beginning was made by opening only two centres—one at Srinagar and the other at Sopore.
2. A *Namda* Model Centre: This centre was set up at Saidakadal, Srinagar. Some buildings were purchased for the purpose and the production of *namdas* was taken into hand.
3. A Carpet Weaving Centre: This centre was located at Rainawari, Srinagar. About twenty carpet looms were installed.

The network of emporia which had been set up through out the country had shown further improvement in the year 1954-55. Business to the tune of Rs. 24,95,000²¹ against previous year's Rs. 23,20,000 was conducted during this year.

STATE'S ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

Right from 1929, Maharaja Hari Singh had introduced the practice of holding an Annual Exhibition of arts and crafts of Kashmir at Srinagar. It used to be, invariably held in the months of September-October. The intention was to put on show the elegant arts and crafts of Kashmir and help in the marketing of these products. The artisans waited for the day with great curiosity and made full preparations for the Exhibition. The Exhibition had instilled the sense of competition among artisans. The best stall used to be awarded a prize. But unfortunately after the partition of the country and the invasion of Kashmir by Pakistan, political scenario had changed. The practice of organising the Exhibition had been given up. After about seven years, in the year 1954, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad's Government revived the practice. The Exhibition organised, now, was more elaborate and multi-dimensional. Craftsmen from other parts of the country were invited to participate in the Exhibition. Various states installed their stalls through their cottage industry departments. Government of India also directed its departments connected with handi-crafts to participate in the Annual Exhibition at Srinagar. All India Handicrafts Board also took part. A special feature of this Exhibition was its Fine Art section. The Exhibition became very popular and about 1,50,000 people visited it within a short duration of six weeks.²²

In the same year, at the invitation of the state Government, All India Cottage Industry Exhibition and a Marketing clinic was held by All India Handicrafts Board at Srinagar. Almost all the states of India participated in this unique Exhibition. The Exhibition gave a first hand information about numerous arts and crafts pursued by artisans in different parts of the country, to the artisans of Kashmir. It enriched them and added to their knowledge and experience. Also, as in previous years, the state participated in various exhibitions held in different states of the country and abroad.

Since the holding of an Annual Arts Exhibition at Srinagar had become a permanent feature, Government decided to keep one wing of the Exhibition displaying arts and crafts of Kashmir, open

throughout the year and named it Central Market. The speciality of this Market was that the prices of goods were fixed and there was no scope for bargaining. Customers could not be cheated. Sales in the Central Market swelled day after day. The tourists, at their first thought visited either Government Emporium or the Central Market. Within a span of one year only, 21,36,000 people visited the Market and sales worth Rs. 9,75,000 were made.²³

ISOLATION BROKEN

Kashmir was now a part of independent India and could not but be a part of the development plans of arts and crafts drawn for whole of the country. All India Handloom Board, All India Handicrafts Board, All India Khadi and Village Industries Board and the Small Scale Industries Board rendered technical assistance and guidance to Kashmir Government. These Boards proposed model schemes, invited proposals from the State and offered financial assistance. Isolation of Kashmir on this score was broken. Kashmir artisan industries were no more dependent on local experience, skill and other resources. The horizon had widened and this instilled confidence and new hope among the artisans of Kashmir. The market for their products was no more a problem for them. The poor artisans could produce the goods and individually hawk these in any part of the country. The scope of institutional selling also had widened. Even though the *Wostakar* made a rich harvest out of the facilities available to him but the poor artisan also got the opportunity to exist honourably.

HELP TO MARGINAL ARTISANS

The marginal artisans or craftsmen could have done better, but they lacked resources. They had not enough money to invest in a venture which could be economically viable. A scheme for giving loans had been devised by the Government, but it was insufficient to cater to the needs of the artisans. During the financial year 1954-55, a provision of Rs. 50,000²⁴ was provided in budget for paying loans to the cottage and small-scale industries. It could not meet even the demand of Rs. 53,325²⁵ already sanctioned for the purpose. Therefore the artisan had to suffer. The Government also came forward in granting subsidy in case of raw material prices for the silk weavers for the Government quota holders of raw silk. The subsidised rate of silk was fixed at Rs. 5,²⁶ much less than the market rate. This concession on the part of the Government did help the handloom silk weavers substantially.

The overall strategy of the National Conference Government to uplift the arts and crafts industry in Kashmir was based on the following basic principles:

1. To provide extensive marketing facilities by opening a network of arts and crafts emporia throughout the country,
2. free the artisan industries from the tyrannical control of *khowaja* by encouraging cooperatives, helping individual artisans and providing them marketing outlets,
3. to provide financial assistance to artisans,
4. to improve the quality of art,
 - (a) to open production and demonstration centres,
 - (b) to facilitate training,
 - (c) to facilitate design development and research.

The progress shown was commendable though a lot required to be still done. In pursuance of the Government policy the J. & K. Government Arts Emporium embarked upon the execution of proposals targeted for the second year of the Second Five Year Plan. Following was the break-up of budgetary provision of Rs. 189 lakh made for various schemes:

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------|
| 1. Expansion and reorganisation of production centres. | = | Rs. 3.33 lakh |
| 2. Revival of <i>kani shawl</i> industry. | = | Rs. 0.13 lakh |
| 3. Establishment of export section at head office. | = | Rs. 0.85 lakh |
| 4. Creation of additional staff. | = | Rs. 0.23 lakh |
| 5. Publicity and Advertisement. | = | Rs. 0.20 lakh |
- (Rs. 445 lakh were kept for the Jammu Calico Centre)

All the schemes were executed except opening of the Export Section. The production wing of the emporium maintained a consistent progress as is clear from a comparison with the year 1956-57.

	1956-57	1957-58
(i) Capital invested	Rs. 8.75 lakh	Rs. 11.5 lakh
(ii) Goods produced	Rs. 14.50 "	Rs. 19.28 "
(iii) Wages paid to workers	Rs. 5.25 "	Rs. 7.15 "
(iv) No. of production centres	Rs. .75 "	Rs. .80 "

(From Administration Report, 1957-58)

The emporia network did not make only the sales of goods produced by its production centres but also of the goods consigned to them. They even purchased goods for sale. The value of goods of various important arts and crafts produced, purchased and consigned in 1957-58 is given in the following table.

S.No.	Item	Produced (in Rs.)	Purchased (in Rs.)	Consigned (in Rs.)
1.	Embroidery	8,69,633	2,52,379	—
2.	Shawl	3,18,576	73,321	92,675
3.	Woollen	3,01,285	72,384	—
4.	Carpet	3,46,785	75,208	—
5.	<i>Gabba</i>	28,500	5,900	—
6.	Chain-stitch	21,092	1,975	—
7.	<i>Namda</i>	1,92,264	61,540	23,692
8.	Government silk	—	25,297	—
9.	Local silk	4,478	1,53,735	—
10.	Papier-mache	43,885	719	—
11.	Wood-carving	53,974	54,808	1,09,724
12.	Silver	9,289	1,888	1,78,579

WORK DONE BY VARIOUS EMPORIA

By the middle of the Second Five Year Plan (1957-58) the number of Government emporia had gone up to 17. The work done by these centres was appreciable and can be examined from the table given here.²⁷

S.No.	Branch of Emporia	Own Sales (in Rs.)	Consignment Sales (in Rs.)
1.	Calcutta	2,47,786.21	1,71,981.10
2.	Lucknow	84,311.74	2,701.10
3.	Jullunder	7,311.74	86.00
4.	Simla	13,510.76	—
5.	Madras	1,52,464.74	20,308.92
6.	Bangalore	55,834.21	2,239.97
7.	Bombay	2,73,674.14	1,09,818.88
8.	Jammu	1,10,836.98	28,032.64
9.	Patna	33,896.14	554.85
10.	Prithviraj Road, New Delhi	12,39,864.59	2,56,630.29
11.	Connaught Place, New Delhi	2,91,923.59	1,47,209.96
12.	Amritsar	86,524.68	488.66
13.	H.P. Agency	962.85	—
14.	Ahmedabad	1,183.18	368.10
15.	Hyderabad	34,309.00	3,267.59
16.	Export	30,955.00	—

The total business by the network of emporia in the entire country had gone from Rs. 5,70,000 in 1953-54 to Rs. 91,26,962 in 1957-58. The turnover had swelled tremendously. The year wise planned expenditure on handicrafts in the Second Five Year Plan was Rs. 3.50 lakh in 1956-57, Rs. 4.22 lakh in 1957-58, Rs. 2.15 lakh 1958-59, 2.16 lakh in 1959-60 and Rs. 3.82 lakhs in 1960-61.²⁸

FOREIGN AND OTHER ENGAGEMENTS

The Government Arts Emporium, Srinagar which was the apex organisation, exuded great confidence. It entered into an agreement with Messrs Spencer and Co. for supplying goods on cash payments and also granting agency to them for sale of purchased goods in West Germany. Goods worth Rs. 50,000 were purchased by that agency during 1957-58. Also the Government Arts Emporium, Srinagar, received a bulk order for purchase of carpets from the Government of U.S.S.R. The Government Arts Emporium participated in foreign exhibitions at Peking and West Germany by consigning goods for display and sale. Even inside the country, the Emporium received a big order for carpets from the *Rashtrapati Bhawan*, New Delhi. In a prize competition for the best articles from the point of utility and price, in the Handicrafts Week organised by All India Handicrafts Board in 1957-58, the Emporium almost bagged all the Prizes, Certificates and cash awards. "In the marketing of Kashmir handicrafts, wider markets were found and certain requirements of successful marketing were met by proper study of buyers needs in respect of standards, quality and prices. With the organisation of production centres, as adjuncts to the marketing organisation of the emporium, it became possible to bring about a sort of a preliminary standardisation in prices²⁹."

cont..

CREDITABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE APEX ORGANISATION

The Arts Emporium; Srinagar, which was the apex organisation, had done good work in laying the network of various emporia and production centres. The achievement of these centres about the end of Third Five Year Plan was³⁰:

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Last Year of First Plan 1955-61</i>	<i>Last Year of Second Plan 1960-61</i>	<i>4th Year of Third Plan 1964-65</i>
1.	No. of branches opened	14.00	13.00	11.00
2.	No. of work centres opened	70.00	33.00	34.00
3.	Goods produced (Lakhs of Rs.)	10.00	17.68	12.53
4.	Sales (In lakh of Rs.)	33.00	33.83	36.10
5.	No. of workers (Employed)	1,500.00	2,500.00	1,016.00
6.	Wages Paid	3.10	10.94	5.98

The table shows that the number of centres, number of workers and the wages paid had declined at the end of the Third Plan. Actually these centres were opened as a temporary measure to act as demonstration or model centres and to give short-term employment benefits to the artisans and craftsmen. When these goals appeared achieved, the artisans were encouraged to fend for themselves and the Emporium went on making fruitful investment as a marketing agency to popularise and expand markets for the arts and crafts of Kashmir. The good work done by the Production Units of the Arts Emporium can be judged from the following.³¹

S. No.	Products Manufactured	Value of Products (In Lakh of Rs.)								
		1969-70	1973-74	1977-78	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
1.	Handicrafts Production Unit	21.26	13.37	20.95	18.32	15.98	18.66	18.38	18.46	16.40

COOPERATIVES AS AN ALTERNATIVE

As a parallel to the traditional type of entrepreneurship in the artisan industry the government encouraged the cooperative system. They intended to break the monopoly grip of the rich entrepreneurs who exploited the artisan classes. This policy was pursued consistently, so much so that by the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan (1978-97) the number of handicraft and handloom cooperative societies had increased to 283 with a membership of 0.10 lakh. By the end of the Sixth Plan (1984-85), the number had risen to 849 with a membership of 0.24 lakhs. By 1989-90 the number of handicraft and handloom cooperatives showed the following trend.³²

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Cooperative Societies</i>	<i>Membership (Lakhs)</i>
1.	1985-86	940	0.25
2.	1986-87	1004	0.25
3.	1987-88	1073	0.25
4.	1988-89	1100	0.27
5.	1989-90	1220	0.25

A keen study of figures reveals that the number of cooperative societies has increased at a good rate but the membership has remained almost static. Even before 1985-86, the trend showed that the number of cooperatives was increasing at a steady rate but the membership was increasing at a diminishing rate. A conclusion could be drawn that the artisans were not enthusiastic about joining the Cooperatives. It could be either because of the bad management which did not inspire them or because they were not ready to give up the traditional system and take the risk of a new experiment. They required to be given a lot of education about cooperatives. Nepotism, red tape and corruption had disheartened and disillusioned them.

THE POLITICAL SCENARIO CHANGES

The war between India and Pakistan 1971-72 had led to the creation of Bangla Desh. This led to the disillusionment in Sheikh Abdullah in respect of the ideas which he had harboured about the future of Kashmir. G.M. Sadiq an astute statesman and a matured politician had already by his policy of liberalisation unleashed forces which could be helpful to an amicable settlement between Sheikh Sahib and Government of India. With what conditions could settlement have been reached, had Sadiq Sahib been living, is difficult to guess. Sadiq Sahib had died in 1971 and had been succeeded by Sayid Mir Qasim. Qasim Sahib went on for a total transfer of power under the conditions worked out and agreed to by the central Government and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. It was, therefore, in 1975 that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, under whose Prime Ministership revolutionary land reforms had taken place between 1948 and 1950, returned as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State. With what aim and achievements remains a moot question. It still continues to be an inexplicable enigma for the people of Kashmir.

More than two decades had passed when Sheikh Sahib had been thrown out of power. Much water had flown down the Jehlum since then. Jawahar Lal Nehru lived no more to support him. The birth of Bangla Desh had shaken him. Influential sections of Kashmiri people had betrayed him for petty concessions. Many of them had appeared as witnesses against him in various false cases instituted against him. A long time had passed and Kashmir had made tremendous progress. Young men born after 1950 were after careers. So the Sheikh had come to power as a disappointed person. He was no more after idealism and never talked about the achievements of the objectives laid in New Kashmir programme. He, therefore wanted to appease the *kulak* in the villages and the *khowaja* controlling the artisan industry. These agencies, he thought, were the source of his strength. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad had corrupted Kashmiri society. G.M. Sadiq, though, personally a man of integrity and honesty, could not deliver the society from this malady. The whole perspective had changed. Corruption and red-tape had become the order of the day and unprincipled appeasing of the vote banks had become an acceptable value. A class of nouveau riche had emerged and they influenced the political process. In such a situation artisans could not get inspired for a voluntary effort to organise, themselves, in cooperatives and get relieved of the exploitation of the traditional system of production which the New Kashmir programme had promised.

TRAINING AND RESEARCH

To improve efficiency and skill of the artisans was one of the basic principles of the Government policy. To this end they conceptualised the opening of training centres for various arts and crafts separately. This programme was both intensive and extensive. For improving art forms the Government had opened an institute for research and development. This institute was named as 'School of Designs' headed by a reputed artist Mr. Trilok Kaul. He was assisted by well know artists, Mr. P.N. Kachru and Mr. Som Nath Bhat. The contribution which these artists made towards the design development will be

ever remembered in the history of Kashmir. They had grown out of the freedom struggle in Kashmir and, therefore, worked with patriotic zeal.

To train newcomers in various arts and crafts, many training centres had been opened. The position of these training centres and trainees trained at the end of the previous three Five Year Plans is give below.³³

S. No.	The Year	Total number of training centres	Total trainees trained (in lakh)
1.	End of Fifth Plan 1978-79	524	0 . 3 5
2.	End of Sixth Plan 1983-84	741	0 . 9 6
3.	End of Seventh Plan 1988-89	783	1.58

The figures show that the rate of increase in the number of trainees who had received training is far more than the rate of increase in the number of training centres opened for the decade 1979-89. It clearly shows that people were very much attracted towards the crafts. There was a time (as explained elsewhere in this work) when the Kashmiri craftsmen gave up the craft for not being profitable for them. But today, adopting of one of these crafts as their calling testifies the fact that these crafts had become economically viable for them.

The position of training centres and the trainees trained³⁴ in case of individual art and craft industries was that, in advanced training in carpet weaving, there were 49 centres with 679 persons getting trained in 1991-92 and in case of *gabbas* and *namdas* there were 15 and 7 centres respectively in which 255 and 160 persons were trained. Crewel work and chain stitch crafts had the highest number of training centres. In case of crewel work the training centres were 48 and in case of chain stitch 27. Both of these training centres trained 901 and 160 persons respectively. For papier-mache the training centres functioning in 1991-92 were 20, in wood carving the number was 15. The trainees trained in them were 285 and 193 respectively.

GOVERNMENT PURSUES ITS POLICIES CONSISTENTLY

With single-minded direction, the Government which though deviated from its course due to certain political upheavals, yet, pursued the policy of widening the market for artisan industries through a network of government emporia, popularised their elegant arts through national and international exhibitions, encouraged artisans by employing them in production centres, motivated them for organising into cooperatives, managed guidance and assistance from All India Boards, provided training by opening training centres and made available new designs and motifs for their products.

Another step taken to popularise Kashmir handicrafts was to launch a publicity campaign. This was done through Indian press and other journals. A colourful and high class catalogue presenting Kashmir handicrafts in a very attractive form was printed and made available in Indian and foreign markets. The All India Handicrafts Board had sanctioned about Rs. 12,500 as their share of assistance for issuing such a catalogue.

All India inputs broadened the scope of artisan industries in Kashmir and the artisans looked forward to a very bright future. The production increased the sales in the local, national and international markets. Profits showed an upward trend which led to further investment and production, increasing employment and the earnings of craftsmen. Financial loans and subsidies were offered to help them. The value of production, purchases, domestic sales and exports through the Handicrafts corporation at the end of the fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Five Year Plans are shown below:³⁴

In Lakhs of Rs.

S.No.	Year	Production	Purchases	Exports	Domestic Sale
1.	End of Fifth Plan 1978-79	13.56	70.45	39.96	215.22
2.	End of Sixth Plan 1983-84	16.50	119.39	58.30	304.92
3.	End of Seventh Plan 1988-89	18.46	211.92	118.54	312.95

Though the production through Handicrafts Corporation has only increased by mere 5 lakhs within about ten years but exports show an increase from Rs. 39.96 lakh in 1978-79 to Rs. 118.54 lakh in 1988-89 from out of the production and purchases made by it. The domestic sales made were of a much bigger volume; of the order of Rs. 215.22 lakh in 1978-79 and Rs. 312.95 lakhs in 1988-89. The domestic sale appears to have been made from the additional sources than production and purchases made by the corporation. In fact the production figures shown in the table are those of the Production Units of the Arts Emporium which had come under the control of the Corporation. The export value of handicrafts reached all time high; 91 million dollars in Feb. 95 (T.V. Report 3rd May 1995).

Craft wise production and employment position of the important artisan industries is given below³⁵.

S. No.	Year	Carpets		Namda		Crewel		Chain Stitch		Woollen Shawls		Wood Carving		Papier Mache		Other Craft	
		Prod.	Empl.	Prod.	Empl.	Prod.	Empl.	Prod.	Empl.	Prod.	Empl.	Prod.	Empl.	Prod.	Empl.		
Empl.																	
1.	End of Fifth Five Year Plan 1978-79	17.67	0.44	0.47	0.01	3.89	0.14	0.20	0.01	8.90	0.35	0.91	0.02	0.97	0.02	15.05	0.34
2.	End of Sixth Five Year Plan 1983-84	29.53	0.60	1.27	0.02	6.74	0.22	0.45	0.01	13.15	0.42	2.30	0.03	1.79	0.04	33.11	0.38
3.	End of Seventh Five Year Plan 1988-89	66.70	0.64	2.75	0.04	10.25	0.25	2.05	0.03	19.40	0.48	5.40	0.05	4.20	0.06	40.05	0.45

Prod. = Production (in crore Rs.)

Empl. = Employment (in lakh numbers)

Examination of the above table shows that a good progress had been made by premier artisan industries during the decade 1979-89. The achievement figures are all the more conspicuous if the comparison is made with earlier years, say 1950-51. Even within this decade the value of carpets produced increased from 17.67 crores to 66.70 crores, crewel work from Rs. 3.89 crores to Rs. 10.25 crores, chain stitch from Rs. 0.20 crores to Rs. 2.05 crores, *Namdass* from Rs. 0.47 to 2.75 crores, woollen shawls from Rs. 8.90 to 19.40 crores. Wood-carving and papier-mache reached to Rs. 5.40 and 4.20 crores from Rs. 0.91 and Rs. 0.97 during this period respectively.

The employment of artisans during the decade increased by 20,000 persons in the carpet industry, and 11,000 persons in the crewel industry. In other industries also it increased satisfactorily.

Exports of almost all important handicrafts showed a steady and healthy growth over the years as can be observed from the following table.³⁶

(Value in Crores of Rs.)

S. No.	Year	Carpet	Namda	Crewel Embroidery	Wood carving	Papier-mache	Chain stitch	Woollen Shawls
1.	End of Fifth Plan (1978-79)	12.10	0.50	1.56	0.62	1.61	0.22	1.21

2.	End of Sixth Plan (1983-84)	22.20	1.48	3.70	1.85	2.22	0.74	2.22
3.	End of Seventh Plan (1988-89)	50.20	1.81	1.78	1.49	2.48	1.00	6.00

The figures given in rupee value cannot give the correct picture due to the fluctuation in prices. But the rate of rise in prices has not been as much higher as the rate of increase in the value of exports. For instance the value of carpets has increased from Rs. 12.10 crores to 50.20 crores and of shawls from Rs. 1.21 crores to Rs. 6.00 crores, *namda* from Rs. 0.50 to 1.81 crores or chain stitch from Rs. 0.22 to 1.00 crores. Only the value of crewel embroidery had increased on a very low rate, but its value had increased to Rs. 3.70 crores at the end of Sixth Plan. On the whole the progress of exports of handicrafts was also satisfactory.

The artisans, it shows, were all on the path of progress, though the Government failed to free them from the tyrannical control of the *khowaja*. As in case of peasantry who have been freed from the bondage of age-old feudal order, the artisans could not achieve the objectives set for them in the *New Kashmir Programme*. Their leaders let them down, despite the sacrifices they had given during the freedom struggle.

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29. *Administration Report*, J&K Govt., 1956-59, p. 32.
30. *Digest of Statistics*, 1965-66, p. 199.
31. *Ibid.*, 1991-92, p. 162.
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Chapter X

HANDLOOM WEAVING—SILKS, WOOLLENS AND PASHMINA

With the introduction of All India Spinners Association in Kashmir during 1929 the Handloom Weaving Industry had taken strides. They had opened a network of branches throughout the valley which had done the excellent work. The total value of *khadi* produced in 1940 was about Rs. 2,15,505, out of which woollens alone amounted to Rs. 2,00,000¹. By 1948-49, the Handloom Weaving Industry had become the largest single industry of the State and more than 45,000 looms² operated about this time.

SILK WEAVING AND SUPPLY OF SILK YARN

In Kashmir, sericulture was the monopoly of the Government and silk yarn was supplied to the weavers by the Government Silk Factory. But the supply of silk yarn did not commensurate with its demand from the individual weavers and the *karkhandars*. Therefore, the government had introduced the Quota System for supplying the yarn. During 1948-49 Kashmir had been placed in a worst form of crisis because of the partition of the country followed by a Tribal raid. The new Government had come to power and it was committed to the welfare of the artisans. The handloom silk weavers were in abject poverty. The Government decided to issue silk yarn free of cost to the Handloom Workers Association, Srinagar for distribution among poor weavers³ who could not afford to operate their looms for want of money to purchase allotted quota of raw silk.⁴ Under this proposal about 3,967 lbs. of raw silk were consumed during this year.⁵ About 42,000 yards⁶ of silk were produced. Over and above the free gift quota, the Government Silk Factory issued silk yarn to other weavers also. As a result, about 3,000⁷ handlooms were engaged in weaving, giving employment to about 6,000 people.

Due to encouraging Government Policy, there grew up a number of handloom silk factories which produced silk on a large scale. These factories in 1953 were:

1. Government Handloom Weaving Factory
2. Kashmir Silk Producing Mills
3. Kashyap Industries, Srinagar
4. Diamond Silks
5. Commercial Union Co.
6. Sarwarnand Raina Silk Weaving Co.
7. Srikanth Raina's Silk Weaving Co.

GOVERNMENT POLICY AFTER 1953

After the change of Government in August, 1953, the new Government took certain important decisions about the Handloom Silk Industry. The decisions were implemented in the year 1954-55. The main features of the new policy were that Government continued to issue raw silk on Quota System. The rate of raw silk per lb. was fixed at Rs. 5 less than the market rate.⁸ The Government subsidised the rate to this extent. The number of quota holders was 87 and the number of looms 599.⁹ The next step which the Government took was to raise the quota per loom from 4 lbs. to 10 lbs.,¹⁰ as 4 lbs. was considered not enough to keep a weaver fully employed on the loom. Increase in quota, besides keeping the weaver fully employed, raised his wages. Again the number of registered looms was reduced to half, but at the same time the number of genuine weavers with looms was registered afresh. This policy led to the increase in the number of workers engaged in the handloom silk weaving sector. While there were only 800 workers engaged in this Industry in 1953-54, and 1,200¹¹ in 1954-55. This kind of rationalization was the need of the hour. After these steps, the Industry picked up. The position of the number of quota holders, registered looms and the quantity of silk yarn issued on the subsidised rates is as follows:¹²

(i)	total number of quota holders	:	95
(ii)	total number of registered looms	:	719
(iii)	total raw silk issued on subsidised rates	:	7,190 lbs.

By the year 1956-57, the position had further improved. The number of quota holders had gone up to 109 and the number of looms to 776.¹³ The rising trend of the handloom weaving of silk from year to year can be gauged by the quantity of raw silk which the Industry used from 1952-53 up to 1956-57, the end of the First Five Year Plan.¹⁴

1952-53	40,000 lbs.
1953-54	50,000 lbs.
1954-55	70,000 lbs.
1955-56	79,000 lbs.
1956-57	93,000 lbs.

The total number of labour employed in the silk sector of the Handloom Industry at the end of the First Five Year Plan (1956-57) was, 2,134 and their wages in case of pure silk fabrics were enhanced from 6 *annas* and 9 *paisa* to *annas* 8.¹⁵ This progress had not taken place only due to the Quota Policy of the Government but also exceptionally good work done by Kashmir Silk Syndicate.

KASHMIR SILK SYNDICATE AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE

On its path to progress, one of the important mile stones of the Handloom Silk Industry in Kashmir was the establishment of Kashmir Silk Syndicate in 1955. It was a Public Ltd. Company. It was constituted of all the handloom silk manufacturers, weavers, dyers, embroiderers and cooperative societies. The objective of the organisation was to help marketing of the products at reasonable prices with a profit margin for the manufacturers as could make their calling economically viable for further production and progress, thus making full employment of weavers a reality. What prompted this organisation to come into existence was the kind of dispensation in which the Industry was suffocating. The whole Industry was at the mercy of a few capitalists, who purchased entire produce of the Industry. Having monopoly over the silk trade, they artificially created circumstances in which the petty manufacturers indulged in cut-throat competition and sold their product at most uneconomic prices. Weaker units would be forced to sell their product just at about cost price and the marginal unit would get wiped out from the market. This unnatural situation had throttled the market forces and

pegged the growth of the Industry to a fixed point, resulting in under employment and unemployment of weavers working in the Industry. Wages paid to the workers were reduced because the entrepreneurs could not earn profits which could keep their firm going. Their *Karkhanas* would be a liability and they would, therefore, close their factories for months together and throw away labour out of employment. It was not the fault of the entrepreneurs or the poor weavers who invested their money and hard labour respectively but of those capitalists who swayed over the Industry and exploited it to the hilt.

The creation of silk Syndicate reversed the whole situation. Here mention deserves to be made about the pioneering work done by Mr. R.K. Tiku, the then general secretary of the Silk Industry Association. By his hard work, dedication and dynamism, he organised all the manufacturers, individual weavers and Cooperative Societies and other allied industries into a public company. It was not easy to convince, in those days, the fatalist weaver and the cynical manufacturer in face of the resistance from the influential capitalists having strong vested interest. But with his untiring efforts and experience, he cut across these difficulties and with an unflinching support of the concerned Minister Pt. Shaym Lal Saraf, who was also his friend, he was successful in laying the foundation of the Silk Syndicate. Mr. Tiku was elected as its Chairman and was also appointed as its Managing Director. Mr. Tiku, a man of great experience, took the challenge in right earnest and with single minded objective of putting the Handloom Silk Industry on firm foundation adopted a bold strategy of purchasing total produce of the Industry on actual manufacturing cost allowing about 12.5% profit to the manufacturer. Manufacturing cost included the reasonable wages for the labour and the reasonable profit percentage to the entrepreneur to run the factory on regular basis ensuring full employment to the labour. The new strategy helped the Industry to stabilise and progress, so much so that up to the end of Second Five Year Plan (1961), it was able to give an annual bonus of 9% to its share holders besides a substantial amount of reserve for the Syndicate to help it to run business.¹⁶ The total labour employed in the Industry reached 3,000 mark in the year 1957-58 and the number of looms increased to 700.¹⁷

The Silk Syndicate did not only help in putting the Industry on sound economic footing but also helped in standardising silk goods. It adopted the policy of controlling quality, by stamping, grading and adopting to other methods of quality control. This policy helped the Industry to such an extent that 'the bulk of the total produce found way in Indian and Foreign markets,¹⁸' leading to the tremendous expansion of the Industry. The work done by the Kashmir Silk Syndicate was highly appreciated by the then chairman of the Handloom Board, Government of India for its laudable work done in Kashmir. He recommended that the Syndicate be registered as a First class Cooperative Society and all the admissible grants, subsidies and other concessions allowed to First class Cooperative Marketing Societies. Subsequently Chairman Handloom Board of Government of India, wrote to the Registrar Cooperative Societies J & K Government to register Kashmir Silk Syndicate as a first class Cooperative Society.

SYNDICATE CHANGES INTO A MARKETING COOPERATIVE

Partly due to the recommendation of the Handloom Board of India and partly due to the limited financial resources of the Syndicate for major sale and purchase operations, the Government of Kashmir registered this organisation as a first class apex marketing society in 1961 under a changed name—'Jammu and Kashmir Handloom Fabrics Marketing Cooperative Society Ltd.' Srinagar. Its scope was widened. It did not deal with only silks but also *Pashmina* and *Rafal* products. The objectives of the Society were¹⁹:

1. To support, protect, promote, increase and encourage sale of Kashmir Handloom fabrics within the country and abroad;

2. to raise funds by way of shares and loans etc.;
3. to organise and develop marketing for the Kashmir Handloom fabrics within the country and abroad, both wholesale and retail;
4. to purchase either for cash or credit all such things, raw material and appliances, chemicals and other accessories that may be required for the Industry and sell the same for cash or credit to members or others;
5. to purchase and hire or otherwise acquire and maintain suitable buildings, apartments, furniture and other fittings within the Indian Union and abroad, emporia or other agencies for publicity and sale of J & K handloom fabrics or for the purpose of achieving any of the objectives for which the Society is established;
6. to purchase either outright or on consignment basis the finished products of its members and sell the same;
7. to undertake market studies of individual markets within the country and abroad, to send out trade missions to foreign countries to appoint representatives and agents in individual markets within the country and abroad for purposes of marketing handloom cloth;
8. to collect statistics and other information regarding the manufacturing, maintenance or trade in the J & K handloom cloth in the state or outside;
9. to act as an agency for the sale of handloom cloth produced in the Indian Union and give publicity to the same;
10. to advise members in regard to the production or quality of fabrics in improved designs and varieties and to standardise the same to develop suitable trade;
11. to arrange, collect and distribute new designs;
12. to arrange inspection of handloom cloth for internal and export sales;
13. to do such other acts as may be conducive to the furtherance of the objects mentioned above;
14. to install, erect and establish such property, processing, finishing or printing establishments as may improve the quality of handloom fabrics.

All the shares of Kashmir Syndicate were transferred to this body. To enhance its working capital, Government of India sanctioned a loan of Rs. 10 lakhs which was made available to the Society in two installments. There was acute shortage of funds during 1962 due to the Chinese war. Yet the amount was sanctioned by the then Finance Minister, Morarji Desai who sanctioned it with no hesitation. It gave a lot of strength to the organisation. The Industry, then, took long strides. Mr. R.K. Tiku continued to be its Managing Director upto 1975 when resigned due to personal reasons.

The Silver Jubilee of this leading marketing society was celebrated in 1987 with a grand record of achievements to its credit. Following table²⁰ gives a lucid picture about the achievements of the Society and the position of the Handloom Industry.

S.No.	Year	Sales Worth in Rs.	Net Profit in Rs.	Dividend in Percentages
1.	Second Year of Third Plan 1962-63	3,87,000	4,500	3
2.	End of Third Plan 1965-66	8,72,000	22,000	8

3.	Plan Holiday			
	(a) 1966-67	13,48,000	79,000	9
	(b) 1968-69	18,35,000	82,000	9
4.	End of Fourth Plan 1973-74	29,76,000	1,78,000	9
5.	End of Fifth Plan 1978-79	53,44,000	3,15,000	9
6.	End of Sixth Plan	72,27,000	3,59,000	9
7.	1985-86	98,27,000	4,77,000	9

The table shows that the sales had increased more than twenty five times from 1962-63 to the year 1985-86. Profits for the same period had gone up 106 times. At the end of Third Five Year Plan the sales made were to the tune of Rs 8,72,000 and at the end of Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Plans these had increased to Rs. 29,76,000, Rs. 53,44,000 and Rs. 72,27,000 respectively. Except at the beginning and the end of Third Plan when bonus distributed was between 3 and 8 percent, it was 9 percent through out this period. Though the sales in the table include sales of some woollen goods also, but the major chunk of these goods was of silks. The gross value added in 1978 after deducting consumption estimates of raw material of handloom silk weaving alone is given in the following table²¹:

S. No.	Industry	Consumption Estimates of Raw Material	Value of Out Put	Gross Value Added (In Lakhs of Rs.)
1.	Silk Weaving	2.52	4.41	1.89

Gross value added in case of handloom silk weaving alone was 1.89 lakhs, which is a satisfactory performance.

Jammu and Kashmir Handloom Fabrics Marketing Society is the richest Society in Kashmir. Its share capital in 1986-87 was:

A class Cooperative Societies	Rs. 8,700
The Government (A class member)	Rs. 50,800
B class members	Rs. 80,700
C class members	Rs. 1,400

With this minor share capital the Society has created assets worth Rs. 44,09,878 in the shape of various Funds which among other items, include General Reserve Fund of Rs. 22,40,090, Building Fund of Rs. 3,71,570, Bad Debit Fund of Rs. 6,34,014, Gratuity and Awards Fund of Rs. 3,52,079 and Cooperative Workers Welfare Fund of Rs. 41,000.²² All these assets were created by the Society from the profits earned and then again invested in the volume of business to increase the turn over and help

in the volume of trade of the society. The society also purchased the shares of other societies in India to facilitate their business. The shares for the value of²³:

1. Rs. 2,81,293, from All India Handloom Fabrics Marketing Cooperative society, Bombay;
2. Rs. 8,547, from National Federation of Industrial Cooperatives, New Delhi;
3. Rs. 40,000, from J & K State Cooperative Bank Ltd., Srinagar;
4. Rs. 12,000, from Petrofills Cooperative, Baroda;
5. Rs. 251, from Mehra Builders, Bombay; were purchased.

Such well established society brought great relief to its members. For the Cooperative institutions, the payments against supplies were made as early as possible and for the individual members payments were made in the stipulated time free of any red tapism. Such a system had kept the *Karkhandars* going on regularly and the weavers employed permanently. The Industry was in a state of prosperity. The Society was able to come to the rescue of poor individual members at the time of dire need. Payments could be made before date in case of suitable cases. The Society would even pay eight percent wages bonus to the Workers of a Cooperative Society which held the membership of the Marketing Society. Under Cooperative Welfare Fund the deserving children of the Members of Cooperatives would get assistance for their education.

Kashmir handloom silk was in demand in foreign markets also. Attractive printed silk items were exported. Generally Handloom House, Bombay did the export business in Kashmir silk. It was those days (1970-75) headed by a dynamic Kashmiri young man Mr. M.L. Tiku who did a yeomans service in augmenting the export of Kashmir Silk Products. Exports were also made by the Government Arts Emporium. The export of silk piece goods from 1973-74 to 1977-78 and 1980-81 increased from 0.5 thousand quintals to 0.10 thousand quintals and then to 0.31 thousand quintals. It decreased to 0.05 thousand quintals in 1981-82 and 1982-83.²⁴ Again it increased substantially to 0.42 thousand quintals in 1983-84.²⁵

Handloom Silk Industry got a set back in 1982 when Handloom House Bombay caught fire. Kashmir enjoyed a special position in this House. It made maximum sale of silk saris through this House. Later the de-monopolisation of sericulture in Kashmir placed the Industry in a precarious position and it was, rather, difficult for the Industry to cope up with the new circumstances. While the new experiment was still under trial, the Kashmir valley was suddenly caught in the whirl pool of militancy. There were moves and counter moves made by militants and security forces, in which people were killed and houses burnt. In this atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty hundreds of looms are lying idle and the business has come down, though the Government is trying to provide market for all the handicrafts of Kashmir. How will the Handloom Silk Industry behave under the de-monopolised conditions, is yet to be judged after the peace and stability returns to Kashmir.

WOOLLENS

The Woollen Industry in Kashmir existed from time immemorial. In recent times, it is All India Spinners Association which gave the Handloom Woollen Industry a great encouragement. The Association was motivated by the Swadeshi Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi. During the time of First World War, the Association continued its efforts for its extension and expansion. They improved the quality of woollen fabrics like tweeds. Other organisations like Kashmir Industrial Emporium and Kashmir Home Industries also encouraged Handloom Woollen Industry. The woollen fabrics received increased attention and private parties engaged themselves with great interest in producing such fabrics of wool. During the years 1941-43 the Department of Industries "took up big

scheme in hand for the production of hand spun and hand woven *pattoos*, principally with a view to provide work to unskilled labour²⁶."

After the partition of the country and the tribal raid on Kashmir, the condition of the Industry was not that bad. The Industry had a lot of local market. The sales effected during 1948-49 were about Rs. 3,21,900 as against Rs. 1,88,882 during the preceding year.²⁷ The total number of registered and un-registered artisans working in the Handloom Woollen Industry was 857 and 930 respectively compared to 693 and 899 in the preceding year.²⁸

As a result of new Industrial Policy which the popular Government formulated as a part of First Five Year Plan, it was decided to open Production-cum-Demonstration centres for various cottage industries in all the divisions of Jammu and Kashmir state. Among other industries, the Government decided to open 4 Demonstration-cum-Production Centres for producing tweeds on handlooms. Beginning was made for opening such centres at Srinagar and Sopore. Subsequently other two centres were also opened. These centres formed as the adjuncts of the comprehensive Marketing organisation — J & K Arts Emporium, which had laid a network of its branches throughout the country. Earlier the Government had already opened a Demonstration-cum-Production Centre for *rafal* shawls at Nowshahra, Srinagar, with the investment of Rs. 1,00,000 giving employment to 600 workers.²⁹

The position of the Handloom Woollen Industry can be assessed from the fact that various kinds of products which it produced at the end of Fifth Five Year Plan had a fair number of production units with good number of workers employed in them and were spread in various districts of the Kashmir valley.³⁰

S.No.	Product Units/Employment	Srinagar/ Badgam Units/Employment		Anantnag/Pulwama Units/Employment		Baramulla/Kupwara	
1.	<i>Loies</i>	23	40	2,745	—	2,555	3,084
2.	<i>Puttoos</i>	10	40	—	—	—	—
3.	Tweeds	43	237	147	378	45	130
4.	Blankets	165	214	67	344	49	73
5.	<i>Rafal</i>	30	234	—	—	—	—

Loies form the part of village industries. During the winter months no agricultural activity takes place in Kashmir due to severe winters, frost and snow. The peasants being idle take to cottage crafts like making mats of dry grass or weaving woollen *loies*. They domesticate goats which provide them wool. Their ladies spin the wool and with the availability of woollen yarn, the peasants weave the *loies* on their crude looms. The *loies* protect their families from the extreme cold and the extra *loies* are marketed for earning an income. This has been the traditional practice of peasants. But the production of *loies* in an organised form was introduced by All India Spinners Association in Kashmir. They standardised the product and created a wide market for the *loies*. *Loies* of fine quality also were produced. *Loies* from Bandipore were considered the best. There could be a single *loie* or double *loies*. *Khudrang Loies* were valued at higher rates. These *Loies* possessed the natural colour and were not dyed. There were *Loies* with borders of different colours red, pink, green etc. *Loies* produced under organised system were purchased by A.I.S.A. branches on fair prices which saved the peasants from making distress sales.

Productions of tweeds had been a later development and these were produced in towns only.

Production of *rafal* and *pashmina* were generally confined to Srinagar district with some exceptions here and there. Woollen shawls of Kashmir have had a great history (as explained else where in this work). Their volume of production and employment has been substantially at a higher side during post-independence period. It was particularly so because the new Government was committed to the welfare of the artisans and they, took steps to do every thing possible for the progress of the handicrafts and the craftsmen producing the beautiful products. How the production of woollen shawls progressed from year to year can be assessed from the following table:³¹

S. No.	Year	Value of Production (in crores of Rs.)	No. of persons employed (in lakhs)
1.	1974-75	6.53	0.27
2.	1979-80	8.90	0.35
3.	1983-84	13.15	0.42
4.	1988-89	19.40	0.48
5.	1991-92	25.45	0.56

The figures in the table show that the production of shawls went on increasing consistently. The production did not suffer during the worst period of violence, killing and kidnapping between the years 1989 and 92. The woollen shawls produced were of both, *pashmina* and *rafal*. The shawls were *Amlikar* and other types including very few of rare quality, *Kani-shawls*. Some experiment of weaving *Kani-shawls* had been taken into hand because of Governments policy of reviving the old glory of the Shawl Industry.

The woollen shawls of Kashmir had an established reputation in the western countries and had therefore great demand outside the country. Following table throws light on the position of exports³² :

S. No.	Year	Value of exports (in crores of Rs.)
1.	End of Fifth Plan 1978-79	1.21
2.	End of Sixth Plan 1983-84	2.22
3.	End of Seventh Plan 1988-89	6.00
4.	1990-91	2.71

Out of all the handlooms produced in Kashmir, it is only the woollen shawls which are exported in bulk. These are made of both *pashmina* and *rafal*. *Rafal* shawls are exported because of its beautiful embroidery. "The embroidery on the wool fabrics of Kashmir is of historical and universal fame, and the delicacy and deftness of the Kashmir crafts-men in this line is yet unrivalled in the world³³."

At the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan, the gross value added by various kinds of products of the Handloom Industry was³⁴.

(Rupees in Lakhs)

S.No.	Products	Consumption Estimates of	Value Out Put	Gross Value Added
1.	Loies	57.64	271.55	213.91
2.	Blankets	10.84	27.96	10.30
3.	Pattoo	2.34	15.79	13.45
4.	Tweed	2.87	15.64	12.77
5.	Rafal	2.52	4.41	1.89
6.	Pashmina	8.57	14.99	6.42
7.	Silk Weaving	2.52	4.41	1.89

PASHMINA

The *Pashmina* industry in Kashmir is an ancient one. But in the post-independence period in Kashmir emphasis was laid on two important aspects of this Industry; making *pashmina* wool available to the industry and making serious efforts for the rejuvenation of the traditional *kani-shawl*, once the pride of Kashmir.

It was in the financial year 1954-55 that a policy was formulated and implemented for making the *pashmina* wool available to the Industry. The demand for *pashmina* wool had continued to increase unabatedly in foreign markets and it had struck an alarm in Kashmir. The Government as a remedial measure thought it necessary to restrict effectively the export of this raw material. As a result, the Ladakh *pashmina* and Wool Syndicate Ltd. imported about 916 *maunds* of *pashmina* wool in Srinagar.³⁵ 561 *maunds* out of this imported quantity was issued to the persons connected with this Industry.³⁶ The rates at which it was sold to the local industry were subsidised. The subsidised rates charged were Rs. 22, 18 and 16 per *wati*³⁷ according to different grades of quality of wool. To the Government it had cost Rs. 25/5 per *wati*.³⁸ The difference was made good from out of the profits of the syndicate which it made from the exports. Actually the grant of permit to the Syndicate and others who imported wool and then exported, it was subject to the condition that while exporting *pashmina* wool they made sufficient quantity of it available to the local industry at lower rates. This policy had eased the difficulty of the availability of raw material to the *pashmina* industry.

Certain weakness of this policy had been observed in due course of time which had again created the problem of the paucity of the raw material. The quantum of *pashmina* wool to be made available to the local Industry was not clearly defined. So it did not fulfill the objective of the policy. It was, therefore, in the financial year 1957-58, that all the exporters of the *pashmina* wool were given the export facilities, if they made one third³⁹ of the total export available to the local Industry. Accordingly total demand of the local Industry was worked out between 600 and 700⁴⁰ *maunds* of raw *pashmina* and it was ensured that this demand of the industry was fully met. With the stable supply condition, the industry was able to give employment to about 10,000 people⁴¹ and the artisans were given an enhancement in wages by 12.5 percent.⁴² Besides, for the retail distribution of the raw *pashmina*, the services of the Retail Dealers Association were secured. With a view to achieve the production of *pashmina* wool from Kashmir's own territory, experimental farms for rearing *pashmina* goat were set up in the outskirts of Ladakh. The decision was taken in the financial year 1957-58. All these steps were taken to ensure the supply of raw material to this important Industry of Kashmir.

KANI-SHAWL

Kani-shawl, a legendary gift of Kashmir's cultural heritage, was already dead by the end of 19th century. After Independence a serious attempt was made to revive it. In the year 1957-58 which was the second year of Second Five Year Plan, an amount of Rs 13 lakh⁴³ was allocated for the revival of *kani-shawl* in the valley. With a view to stop the steady extinction of *kani-shawl*, a detailed proposal was submitted to the Government of India and a subsidy was obtained for setting up a pilot centre for providing livelihood to the artisans working in the line and also to train new entrants. Some success was achieved in this glorious effort and samples of *jamawars* produced looked similar to the old type of shawls, both in texture and design.⁴⁴

At the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan the number of units established for producing *kani-shawls* and the number of artisans employed in them is given below.⁴⁵

S.No.	Product	Srinagar/ Badgam Units/Employment		Anantnag/Pulwama Units/Employment		Baramulla/Kupwara	
1.	<i>Kani shawl</i>	166	197	—	—	2	2

It shows that the project of reviving the *kani-shawl* had started to bear fruit. The value of the output, the consumption of raw material and addition to the gross value of the *kani-shawls* produced at the end of Fifth Five Year Plan also alludes to this fact. It is clear from the following data:⁴⁶

(Rupees in Lakhs)

S. No.	Product	Consumption of Raw Material	Value of Output	Gross Value Added
1.	<i>Kani-shawl</i>	2.56	8.98	6.42

The figures show that the production of *kani shawls* had added to the gross value at least Rs. 6.42 lakhs. The *kani shawl* had made a new beginning! The Industry besides producing *kani shawls*, produced fine *pashmina* cloth and *shahtush*. Pashmina/shahtush worth Rs. 42.67 lakhs⁴⁷ were sold in domestic sales by J & K Handicrafts Corporation during the year 1989-90. *Shahtush* was even exported.

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Chapter XI

CARPETS, NAMDAS AND GABBAS

IDENTITY OF KASHMIRI CARPETS

Not before too long, it was believed that weaving of carpets was learnt by Indians from Persians. "But the methods and designs of Indian carpet weavers are so peculiarly indigenous and so easily distinguishable from those of other countries that the theory has now been almost given up, and it is admitted by all that carpet weaving is one of the ancient and principal industries of India¹." But in case of Kashmir, there is evidence to show that Zain-ul-Abidin requisitioned weavers from Samarkand who taught carpet weaving in Kashmir. It was a little later that Persian influence permeated the valley. No doubt fine carpets are, today, made at Agra, Mirzapur, Amritsar, Bikaner, Jaipur, Ellora and Masulipatnam, but Kashmir carpets have an identity of their own. "Carpet weaving in Kashmiri has evolved such patterns of leaf and flower as may not be found anywhere else in the world²."

PROBLEMS

After independence, the carpet industry in Kashmir was beset with several problems. First of all there was a changeover from foreign masters to the local entrepreneurs. They lacked the technique and the management skills. Secondly, due to the partition of the country many of the master-artisans had settled in Pakistan. Then again, Pakistan invasion created a crisis in the artisan industries for want of markets for their products. Otherwise also the Great Depression of 1929-33 had given a great setback to the industry, though the Swadeshi Movement and Government subsidy had, to a greater extent offset its impact. For instance the workers employed in 1930, were 6,690 and 1558 in 1936 and only 500³ in the middle of the financial year, 1939-40. It shows that though it was fighting the onslaught of the Depression with a Swadeshi spirit, yet the break-out of the Second World War in 1939 gave it a great jolt and subsequently the division of the country added to its maladies. "Now, so the Habiba the son of Shah Mohammed told me, the majority of carpet weavers are again resting, but he is very sure that if only he could get to England or America he could recreate the demand for lovely carpets made in his country⁴ ..." These words were told to Pearce Gervice when he visited the house of Shah Mohammad to see his workshop about the middle of the present century.

THE CHALLENGE

Induction of the National Conference Government headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had unleashed forces which created an environment full of patriotism and will to work hard. The foreign carpet dealers had sold their factories and the local people had come forward to purchase these in right earnest. Although the local entrepreneurs lacked experience and expertise in the field, yet they accepted

the challenge and with Government encouragement made steady progress. A few dynamic companies⁵ like Indo Kashmir Co., Ghulam Mohi-ul Din and Sons. and Modern Carpet Factory took advantage of the vacuum created by the foreign entrepreneurs and worked hard to capture the market. These enterprising entrepreneurs broadened the base of the industry to produce goods not only for a small selective clientele in western countries attuned to a specific taste of design and colour, but for the much bigger oriental markets. Accordingly, they changed the colour and design suited to the oriental aesthetics. This experiment succeeded and the carpet industry started to pick up steadily. During 1953-54 there were as many as seven carpet factories in Kashmir.⁶ These were:

1. East India Carpet Weavers Factory.
2. C.M. Hadow.
3. Cooperative Carpet Weavers Factory.
4. Indo Kashmir Carpet Factory.
5. Kashmir Carpet Factory.
6. Kailash Carpet Factory.
7. Bisati Carpet Factory.

The total number of workers working in these factories in 1954 was 800 and the value of goods produced about 20 lakhs.⁷ All India Handicrafts Board had taken a study of the Handicrafts in 1954 and they had made a note of the workers employed and volume of production in carpet industry.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

The Government, as a matter of policy was moving ahead in a planned manner in case of all the handicrafts. In fact in the First Five Year Plan provision of Rs. 25.50 lakh was made for the cottage industries. They were following the line of providing markets, opening demonstration-cum-production centres, organising cooperatives and providing training to the craftsmen. To begin with, the Government proposed to provide markets and popularise handicrafts. In fact it was as early as 1948-49 that the scheme of laying a network of Government emporia was formulated and opened at Srinagar, Delhi, Bombay and Simla. This gave ample opportunity to carpet manufacturers to display and sell their elegant products. The network was steadily established in all the important capital cities and commercial centres of the country.

Jammu and Kashmir Arts Emporium was not only to facilitate the marketing of handicrafts but also open some demonstration-cum-production centres for providing employment to the artisans working in various crafts. As a result, the Director of Industries, after touring the state in 1954-55 formulated a scheme for all the handicrafts. In case of the carpet industry, he proposed opening of a Demonstration-cum-Production Centre at Rainawari, Srinagar. About twenty looms were installed there.⁸ As a follow up to this policy, Government transferred, Government Carpet Factory, Srinagar to the control of Kashmir Arts Emporium in 1956 along with assets valuing Rs. 75,564.⁹ This factory produced high quality carpets and introduced new designs. The factory gave employment to 70 weavers. The factory produced carpets worth Rs. 40,000.¹⁰

Like other handicrafts, the carpet industry was slowly picking up and in the second year of the Second Five Year Plan, 1957-58, the industry produced goods worth Rs. 3,46,785¹¹ in the production units of the Kashmir Government Arts Emporium. The emporia network throughout the country also purchased carpets worth Rs. 75,208¹² for sale in addition to the carpets produced by the production centres. To encourage export of carpets an Export Section was established within Kashmir Arts

Emporium during 1957-58 with an outlay of Rs. 85 thousand.¹³ Government attention towards export trade of carpets, boosted their demand in foreign countries. How the value of exports tended to increase plan after plan, is shown below¹⁴.

S. No.	Year	Value of Exports (in crores)	Percentage Increase
1.	1970-71	0.73	
2.	End of Fourth plan 1973-74	1.73	130.7
3.	End of Fifth Plan 1978-79	12.10	599.7
4.	1979-80	26.96	122.81
5.	End of Sixth Plan 1983-84	22.20	17.6

The examination of the table shows that there has been tremendous increase in the value of carpets exported. Between the Fourth Five Year Plan and Fifth Plan, there has been almost an increase of 600%. There was an increase of Rs. 10 crores between the Fifth and Sixth Plans. There have been normal years of increase and also the top years. For instance in 1979-80 the value of carpets exported was the highest, e.g. Rs. 26.96 crores. There has been almost 100-fold increase between 1930 and 1980. One might argue that the values had been inflated due to the rise in prices. But the increase in price level was much less than the increase in the value of carpets exported. The fact is also substantiated when we compare the exports in weightages. For instance about 0.40 thousand quintals of carpets exported in 1973-74 increased to 0.51 thousand quintals during 1980-81.¹⁵ There was an increase of 11 thousand quintals — not an unimpressive increase. The value of carpet export had gone to Rs. 50.20 crores in 1988-89 to Rs. 109.01 crores in 1991-92¹⁶ and 54 million dollars in 1993-94.¹⁷

DRIVE FOR TRAININGS

Increase in carpet exports could not have taken place unless an infrastructure for bulk quantities could have been created. The Government policy was to widen the base of this traditional industry by introducing it in the rural areas. This could give employment to the unemployed and also impart craft education to the children. With this aim in view various State and Central Government organisations launched a massive carpet weaving training programme. Under this programme about 41,000 weavers were trained by 1983-84.¹⁸ Also there were about 25 advanced carpet training centers in position in Baramulla District and 4 centres in Leh during 1983-84. During 1990-91 the number of these centres was increased to 26 in Barahmulla, 2 in Kupwara and 1 in Kargil. The trainees trained were 610 in Barahmulla, and 50 in Kupwara.

HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL EXPANSION

The Government inputs at home and the rising demand for Kashmir carpets in the international market led to the expansion of the industry both horizontally and vertically. The value of production and the number employed at the end of Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Plans are given below¹⁹.

Sl. No	Year	Production (in crores)	Employment (in lakhs)
1.	End of Fifth Plan 1978-79	17.63 (1979-80)	0.44 (1979-80)
2.	End of Sixth Plan 1983-84	29.53	0.60
3.	End of Seventh Plan 1988-89	66.70	0.64

It is very clear from the table that while production has increased at a much higher rate employment has only at a diminishing rate. Since the production is shown in rupee values, the increase in prices, no doubt, could have inflated the production values. But the progress of the industry can be explained on different plain and with absolute figures. The data in the above table shows that the employment had increased from 44 thousand in the year 1979-80 to 64 thousand in 1988-89. Similarly the carpet production units had increased to 7,211 while in 1953-54 there were only 7 factories. The number of carpet units in various districts in 1978-79 were²⁰:

1.	Srinagar/Badgam	=	4735
2.	Anantnag/Pulwama	=	823
3.	Baramulla/Kupwara	=	1653
			<u>7211</u>

INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

Very strong motivating factor for the progress of the industry was the international demand for carpets. 90% of the annual production of carpets was exported.²¹ A state of increased demand, increased sales, higher profits and increased investment prevailed in the Industry. It was at its best. In this process the rich *karkhandars* the *khwajas* made fat profits. The small investor to whom the *khwaja* provided the design eked a good living while the weavers mostly the child labour was exploited to the maximum.

The demand in the international market had grown because, Iran, the main competitor of carpet trade had made a major shift in her economic policy at home. The Shah of Iran was modern in outlook and he wanted to modernise Iran. He had the vision of future. He believed that oil resources of his country could, some day, get depleted and the wisdom lay in investing the income from Oil resources, in building the infrastructure for large scale industrialisation of the country. Such a policy could stand in good stead for the reliable economic future of his country. Though he was a king who wasted resources on his personal pomp and show, yet to him goes the credit for taking a course which was on right lines. As a result of this policy, many steps were taken among which one was to discourage carpet weaving in big towns. Big towns were the places where the rich people had made huge investments and earned enormous profits. They exploited the weavers whom they fed on pittance. The child labour was abused and tyrannised. He stopped this kind of dispensation for the poverty stricken weavers and tyrannised children. He banned employing of child labour. The change brought in Iran reduced the share of Iran's carpet trade in the international market. The vacuum thus created was filled by India and Pakistan. From India, it could be only Kashmiri carpets which could replace Iranian carpets. It led to a boom in the carpet industry in Kashmir.

The enviable position of the carpet industry in Kashmir thus obtained did not sustain beyond the 80's of the present century. Many international factors intervened to unhinge the happy state of the

industry. One of the factors was that Peoples Republic of China entered the carpet export trade in a big way. They have the availability of superior raw material and cheap labour. In their overall policy of expanding trade and earning hard currency, they expanded the carpet Industry to make available bulk of carpets for export. Both in quality and price-viability, their carpets presented a tough competition. Pakistan also improved their stuff by using superior quality of wool from New Zealand which gave a better sheen²² to the carpets and they looked more elegant. So, also entered Turkey in the international market as one more competitor. The traditional market for carpets e.g. Western Europe and America was caught in the inbuilt malady of recession in their economic system. They had, therefore, curtailed the expenditure on luxury items. So the demand for carpets in these parts of the world fell substantially. All these factors proved detrimental to the carpet export trade of India, particularly Kashmir.

At the home front, the mushroom growth of carpet weaving units, led to the deterioration of the quality of carpets. Small investors managed to purchase the services of semi-trained weavers and employed a few children and started a couple of looms in their houses especially in the rural side. They used inferior quality wool. Without proper monitoring of weaving, carpets with defective designs and asymmetrical contours were produced. Such stuff could not be passed for exports. In certain cases such carpets, somehow, found their way to the international market and defamed Kashmir carpets. Kashmir carpets, had by now, to face tough competition in the home market also. Mirzapur carpets, though entirely a different stuff counterpoised as a substitute for Kashmir carpets for the lower middle class families. Mirzapur had steadily improved the stuff and started weaving silk and silk-wool carpets. Carpets of high knottage, comparable to Kashmir were produced.²³ The prices were relatively cheaper. Preference for these carpets by a section of people who could not afford Kashmir carpets also gave a setback to the carpet industry in Kashmir.

VOLUME OF PRODUCTION

The value of production of carpets had increased at a diminishing rate. It increased from Rs. 19.04 crores in 1980-81 to Rs. 29.53 crores in 1983-84 while it had increased from Rs. 1.38 crores to Rs. 17.67 crores in 1980-81²⁴. The value of exports had fallen drastically from Rs. 26.96 crores in 1979-80 to Rs. 22.20 crores.²⁵ However a favourable situation emerged once again and the Industry started picking up. The value of carpets produced increased from Rs. 29.53 crores in 1983-84 to Rs. 66.70 crores in 1988-89.²⁶ The exports increased from Rs. 22.20 crores in 1983-84 to Rs. 50.20 crores in 1988-89.²⁷ The survival of the industry could be attributed to the policy change made by the traditional importers especially West Germany and America who stopped discouraging imports of hand-knotted carpets about 1983. These countries represented about 50 percent of the total imports of the world.²⁸

COMPOSITION OF THE CARPET TRADE

There has been a steady shift in the composition of carpets exported from Kashmir. Traditionally Kashmir had been producing woollen carpets, but in recent times there has been a change. Silk and other types of carpets have been added. Woollen carpets have a variety of their own and so have the silk carpets. Woollen carpets have following types:

1. Woollen carpets with 90% wool and 10% cotton.
2. Woollen carpets with silken base with 60% wool, 3% silk and 10% cotton.
3. Woollen carpets with silk touch, having 80% wool, 10% silk and 10% cotton.

Silk carpets have the types:

1. Full silk carpets with cent percent silk.

2. Silk carpets with 90% silk and 10% cotton.
3. Silk carpets with metallic threads—is a silk carpet with *Tila*.

Statistics show that there is a shift from woollen to silk carpets in the composition of exports from Kashmir. The shift appears to be significant. The following table substantiates the shift:²⁹

Year	Silk carpet exports (in crore Rs.)	Woollen carpet export (in cr.)	Total exports (in cr.)	Share of silk carpets in total (in per.)	Share of woollen carpets in total (in per.)
End of Fifth Plan	6.08	6.02	12.10	50	50
End of Sixth Plan	16.33	5.89	22.22	73	27

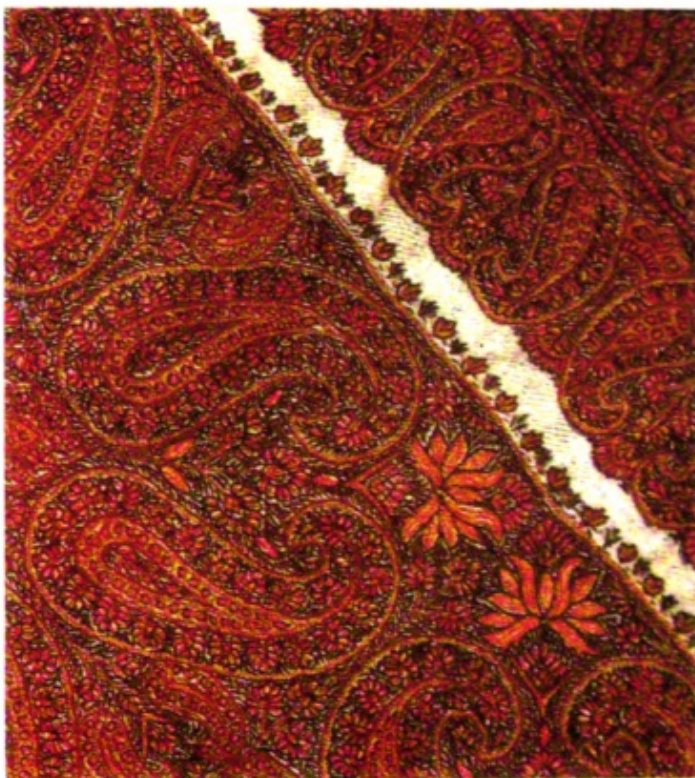
The figures show that the value of silk carpets increased from Rs. 6.08 crores at the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan to Rs. 16.33 crores at the end of Sixth Plan, with the percentage share of the total, rising from 50% to 73%. On the other hand, the value of woollen carpets decreased from Rs. 6.02 crores to Rs. 5.89 crores during this period and the percentage share fell from 50% to 27%. This change in the composition of carpets in the export trade has taken place because the cost of production of woollen carpets increased due to increase in wages and the tough competition it faced in the international market.

QUALITY CARPETS

For a good quality carpet, good raw material, attractive design, fine dyes and proper dyeing, good workmanship and a fine finish are essential. Fine knotting and large number of knots in a carpet are considered the attributes which make a carpet excellent. Fine knotting helps in depicting a small motif with precision, "Some very fine silk carpets in small sizes have been created with knots as high as 3,600 per square inch, but these are exhibition of skill and are mainly made for display or as museum pieces³⁰." But carpets having knots from 200 to 900 per square inch have assumed excellence and are ranked the finest in the world. Generally carpets in 18x18 and 20x20 knots are produced these days in Kashmir.

More than a century back, the Kashmir carpet industry used the dyes extricated from vegetable and animal sources. Craftsmen made these dyes in their homes. "The madder root which grew wild provided the most important range of pinks and reds, and cochineal and turmeric were also used for shades of red. The saffron crocus, cultivated in the fields of Pampore in Kashmir, provided pure yellow, while its wild counterpart as well as pomegranate skin and distilled turmeric, provided reddish yellow. The rhubarb plant is said to provide dark red and copper red. Green came from the grass (*kusa*) and brown from the leaves of the *kikar* tree³¹." But this is not the practice today. Aniline dyes are used now. These were introduced in Kashmir by European factory owners over a century back. They installed dyeing plants and requisitioned the services of trained dyers. There is a controversy over the fact whether vegetable dyes or aniline dyes provide the required sheen and lustre to carpets. E. Gans Roedin, a researcher is of the view that "...it is impossible to achieve such alluring sheen with chemically dyed wool³²." George Birdwood also is of the view that "...the manufacture of carpets is capable of great extension and has a great future before it, if only somehow aniline dyes could be kept out of the country³³."

Besides a mushroom of small carpet units, there are about a dozen of carpet factories with about



An Amlikar Shawl
The craftsmanship of this Pashmina Shawl was awarded
by the State Govt. in 1988-89



Carpet-Kashmir Kashan Silk



Carpet-Kashmir Kirman Silk



Carpet Kashmir Dyozan Silk



Beautiful Namdas in different Shapes and Sizes

100 workers in each producing carpets in Kashmir today. These factories are very well organised and the work of weavers is properly monitored and supervised. They have under their permanent employ expert designers and possess their own dyeing and washing departments. They display their products in their showrooms organised within their factory premises. The workers in these factories, unlike those in villages, are regular employees. The wages to the weavers are paid per thousand knots. A good carpet weaver earns between Rs. 20 and 25 a day. The prices of carpets have increased enormously and as a result, the wages have gone up. For instance, the price of a woollen carpet 196 knots per square inch (14 x 14) in 1956-57 went up from Rs. 15 per square foot to Rs. 2,000 today. Wages too changed according to the price and quality of the carpets. Bulk - production of carpets is made of in staple rayon silk. The wages for such carpets, 284 knots (18 x 18) type are about Rs. 100 per square foot. For the carpet of same specifications in pure silk the wages are Rs. 112 per square foot.

NAMDAS

Namda industry as an independent handicraft in Kashmir, is of recent origin. It came into existence immediately before the Second World War when the closure of the Leh Treaty Road took place. Before that about 2,00,000 pieces of *Namdas* used to be imported from central Asia.³⁴ According to the State Custom Department not a single *namda* came from Central Asia in 1940-41. It was about 1938 that production of *namdas* in Kashmir was taken into hand. Labour available from the Carpet Industry helped in its quick growth. But there was difference in quality. The *namdas* from Central Asia were made of pure wool. But the *namdas* produced in Kashmir were mixed. "*Namdas*, a popular part of Kashmir embroidery, are made of mixture of wool and cotton pressed in a fabric-like felt and ornamented by applique work³⁵." Cotton is stuffed between the two layers³⁶. In our country we have pure white *namdas* produced at Jodhpur and Jaipur and are considered exceptionally fine specimens of craft.³⁷

COST OF PRODUCTION AND RECIPIENTS OF PROFITS

The cost of production of such *namdas* would involve, the price of one *seer* of wool, one *seer* of cotton, 1/4 *seer* of soap and the cost of reed mat (used in felt making) and other tools. It would come to Re. 1/- and annas 15.³⁸ But *namda* makers sold it to the investors *khawajas* at Rs. 2 and annas 12.³⁹ The investor would sort out these and classed them in categories of 1st. and 2nd class as per the make and quality. He would then pay at an average rate of Rs. 2 and annas 8 per un-embroidered *namda*.⁴⁰ The *khawaja* would send these *namdas* for embroidery. The cost would then come to⁴¹:

	Rs.	Annas	Paise
1. Average cost of <i>namda</i> to the investor =	2	8	0
2. Cost of embroidery =	1	4	0
3. Washing and printing charges =	0	1	6
4. Establishment & other charges inclusive of interest on capital and other expenses =	0	2	6
Total =	4	0	0

The industry was in the hands of a few monopolists. They sold *namdas* locally in the markets of the country and exported these to America and Europe. Out of two to three lakh pieces of *namdas* which they produced, fifteen to twenty thousand pieces were sold in local market, fifty to seventy thousand pieces in various markets throughout the country and the rest were exported to America and

Europe.⁴² In Europe and America the wholesale price of a *namda* would be Rs. Thirteen annas eight or Rs. fourteen. But in the retail markets, it was sold at Rs. Eighteen and Annas eight. So it was the *khwaja* who made huge profits.

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

About 5,000 workers got full employment in the industry during the early forties of the century. But according to Mr. Ganjoo's analysis⁴³ the industry could not have given employment to more than 3,500 or 4,000 workers. They were carders, millers, and pressers. The pressers were mostly children. The carders earned between annas eight to twelve annas per diem, millers six to ten annas and the pressers two to three annas per day. The wages of the embroiderers called *jalakduz* though fixed at annas seven per piece, actually got nothing because the cost of woollen and cotton yarn and other expenses which were to be arranged by the *jalakduz* himself, neutralised their wages which they were expected to earn. They, therefore, resorted to fraudulent means of making good their loss by using less quantity of yarn and saving labour time by adopting longer stitches in embroidery work. It spoiled the design. They organised a massive strike in 1941, demanding increase in their wages which bore some fruit and gave them some relief.

The *namda* industry was at its zenith in the early months of 1941, when war took a serious turn. The export of *namdas* was stopped all at once due to the shipping difficulties. The production was drastically curtailed and bulk of labour thrown out of employment. The industry lingered in this state till the partition of the country and subsequent Pakistan invasion on Kashmir. These developments put Kashmir in a major political crisis. All the communication and road links with rest of the country were cut off. The visitors traffic came to a dramatic halt. There was no route over which the tourists could visit Kashmir. The J.V. Road led to Pakistan. B.C. Road, at best could take one to Jammu. There was no reliable road link either, till Jammu was connected with Pathankot by a 'pucca' road. Kashmir handicrafts were, therefore, hard hit for want of a market.

THE NEW POLICY

In the year 1948, when the National Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah, virtually picked the Government from what was named as Lalchowk, a well considered policy was introduced to extricate the artisan industries from a state of complete stagnation and isolation. The policy envisaged providing of market facilities, opening demonstration-cum-production centres, encouraging artisans' co-operatives, providing training facilities and giving financial assistance. To provide marketing facilities art emporia were opened in the capital cities and commercial centres of the country. The attractive arts and crafts of Kashmir were displayed and marketed through these emporiums. The *namda* also found its corner in these emporiums. Marketing of handicrafts were also augmented by displaying Kashmir handicrafts in the exhibitions held in the country and outside. In such exhibitions *namdas* also had their place and were marketed and well introduced all-over the world.

In pursuance of the new policy of opening Demonstration-cum-production centres, the Government sanctioned a *namda* Model Centre. It was set up near Saida Kadal, Srinagar during the financial year, 1954-55⁴⁴. Some infrastructure in the shape of buildings and other materials were purchased. Production of *namdas* on a small scale was taken in hand at the centre. It was done with a view to present a model for establishing production units and also to help the artisans to seek employment. Production centres were placed under the administrative control of the Government Arts Emporium. Government even transferred⁴⁵ the Government Namda Factory, Srinagar to the Arts Emporium in the financial year 1956-57. The factory produced 2,400 pieces⁴⁶ of *namdas* up to the end of 12th September, 1956 when the transfer took place. Out of 2,400 pieces, 225⁴⁷ were embroidered ones. The

value of goods produced in this factory was Rs. 52,479.⁴⁸ This factory produced goods for sale through the network of emporia throughout the country.

Besides setting up model demonstration centres for the guidance of craftsmen, the Government established various training centres to train fresh craftsmen to widen the base of the industry. In 1991-92 the break up of these training centres, district-wise, along with trainees, was as under⁴⁹.

S. No.	District Srinagar		District Anantnag		District Pulwama		District Kupwara	
	No of Training Centres	No of Trainees Trained	No of Training Centres	No of Trainees Trained	No of Training Centres	No of Trainees Trained	No of Training Centres	No of Trainers Trained
1.	4	89	1	21	1	25	1	25

Total number of trainees trained this year were 160 but the training programme had actually been started from 1976-77 and hundreds of new craftsmen had been trained in these training centres.

PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT

Government encouragement to the industry gave it a great boost and it showed steady growth in its production value and employment. The training programme, especially, widened the base of the industry resulting in increasing its turnover. The position of the industry and its steady growth can be gauged from its production value and the employment it gave to the people at the end of Fourth, Fifth and Sixth plans⁵⁰.

S.No.	Year	Employment (in lakh)	Production (in Rs. crore)
1.	End of Fourth Plan 1978-79	0.01	0.47
2.	End of Fifth Plan 1983-84	0.02	1.27
3.	End of Sixth Plan 1988-89	0.04	2.75

An examination of these figures shows that there has been almost six-fold increase in the value of *namdas* produced between Fourth and the Sixth Plans. But there has been only four fold increase in employment for the same period. The difference appears to be natural for the reasons that the prices during this period increased to the same extent. It shows that industry was steadily progressing.

EXPORTS

The export of *namdas* also showed the increasing trend. The plan wise value of exports of *namdas* is shown in the following table.⁵¹

The value of export of *namdas* between the Fourth and Sixth Plans have more than doubled. Allowing the price rise during this period one can safely conclude that the export of *namdas* also was showing a tendency towards a steady increase.

Sl. No.	Year	Value of Exports (in crore Rs.)
1.	End of Fourth Plan 1978-79	0.80
2.	End of Fifth Plan 1983-84	1.48
3.	End of Sixth Plan 1988-89	1.81

The *namda* industry had established a wide base. It had spread throughout the Kashmir valley by the end of Fourth Plan. It can be well gauged from the statistical data given and examined below.⁵²

No of Units and Employment

S. No.	Year	Srinagar/Badgam		Anantnag/Pulwama		Baramulla/Kupwara		Total	
		Units/Employment		Units/Employment		Units/Employment		Units/Emp.	
1.	End of Fourth Plan 1978-79	235	847	46	144	112	530	393	1527

Namdass are produced in rectangle, oval and round shapes. The embroidery is done by hand with *tambour* needle or hook. It is a chain-stitch done with woollen yarn. Traditionally the *namda* designs are florals.⁵³

Further, the performance of the industry at the end of the Fourth Plan showed that it added to the gross value very convincingly. The analysis shows that the consumption of raw material valued at Rs. 12.12 lakh gained an added value of Rs. 34.67 lakhs.⁵⁴ This being the position at the end of the Fourth Plan, the performance at the end of Seventh Plan could be at a much higher level as has been already shown; the Industry had made four fold progress by that time.

GABBAS

Gabbas are made on a woollen cloth consisting of old rags stitched together to make a blanket. The blanket is then dyed, generally black. There are basically, two types of decoration. In one case flowers and shapes are cut out from coloured wool cloth and then stitched on the black base. The other type is an embroidered design in which coloured woollen or cotton yarn is used and worked by chain stitch needles over a drawn design. Only a few colours are used in this design. Brigid Keenan who visited Kashmir in the eighties of the present century was impressed to see *gabbas*. "Other uniquely Kashmiri embroidery work is seen in the floor coverings called gubbass made out of thick woollen cloth, usually old blankets cut out and stitched one on top of another in complicated applique patterns⁵⁵." A *gabba* on which no patch work is done, is embroidered fully. The designs are made either in soothing or showy colour. While working on *namdas* or *gabbas* the Kashmir embroiderers take liberty in displaying their art. They have been creative "Elaborate patterns of floral gardens, branches of fruit or flowering trees symmetrically arranged in geometrical composition based on counter-designs of carpets and rugs, show the genius of the Kashmiri embroiderer at his best⁵⁶."

The *gabba* industry is by and large concentrated in one of the populous towns of Kashmir valley, Anantnag. There live a specialised community of craftsmen in this town which is known for this craft. *Gabbas* are also made to order from this town. "The finished products can be used as a rug, diwan

cover, or coverlet and are much admired for their rich colours and exquisite floral patterns⁵⁷. In Kashmir *gabbas* are used as mattresses also. In that case, these are stuffed with carded cotton. Cotton lining is used in case of inferior quality *gabbas*. No such lining is needed for *gabbas* made of fresh woollen blankets. The cotton lining is obtained from old cotton clothes which are properly washed and stitched. In certain cases cotton laces are stitched on the borders of *gabbas*. Embroidery is done both with cotton and woollen yarn. The yarn may be fresh or old one. The quality of yarn used makes the difference in prices.

VOLUME OF PRODUCTION

Gabba is a recent innovation in Kashmir. No definite date can be fixed for its origin. In its earlier stages it was very coarse thing and used by poorer sections of people. Gradually, it developed both in stuff and design. "By and by goods found their way even into the royal family and European visitors to Kashmir began to buy *gabbas*⁵⁸." Due to the increase in their demand, sale depots were opened at many places in the valley to meet the rising demand.⁵⁹ By thirties the Industry had carved out a wide base for itself. The volume of production between 1930 and 1936 showed the following trend in the town of Anantnag⁶⁰:

Volume of Production (In Rs.)

S.No.	Town	1930-31	1931-32	1932-33	1933-34	1934-35	1935-36
1.	Anantnag	50,205	45,136	37,825	35,825	38,680	39,480

The industry had not widely spread in Srinagar or Baramulla, though in 1931-32, Srinagar produced Rs. 500 to 600 worth *gabbas*. Baramulla produced only printed *gabbas* worth the same amount. More details about the volume of production were available in the year 1936-37. The details give a break up of embroidery, applique and printed *gabbas* and are put in the following table.⁶¹

S.No.	Town	Embroidered <i>gabbas</i> in Rs.	Applique <i>gabbas</i> in Rs.	Printed <i>gabbas</i> in Rs.	Total
1.	Anantnag	25,195	1,546	Nil	40,655
2.	Srinagar	827	5,500	250	6,577
3.	Baramulla	Nil	Nil	460	460

The examination of the statistics shows that the *gabbas* were more produced in Anantnag than Srinagar. In Anantnag the production was six times more than Srinagar. Also it shows that Anantnag produced embroidered *gabbas* more than applique *gabbas* while in case of Srinagar it was completely a reverse position. Srinagar produced applique *gabbas* more than embroidered. Baramulla produced neither of the two. It specialised in the production of printed *gabbas*. On the whole the industry was in a state of stagnation in the post-depression period. The volume of production in 1930 amounted to Rs. 50,205 in the Anantnag district while in 1937 it was only Rs. 40,655. But its base appears to have widened and district Srinagar also produced *gabbas* worth, Rs. 6,577 (1937).

Since *gabbas* had not as yet become an item of export, the Second World War did not have any adverse effect on the Industry. In fact war had brought world economy out of the gloomy state of the Great Depression and it had helped the Industry to make some progress. During the financial years, 1940-41, 1941-43 important improvements in design had made the Industry very popular and the value

of *gabba* production had gone up to Rs. 1 lakh⁶² while it was Rs. 47,692 in 1937 including the value of printed *gabbas*. The industry also provided employment to 400 families excluding the number of millers and middle men.⁶³ It would mean a work force of (400x5) 2,000 persons plus the number of millers and middlemen. Two English firms which were producing carpets began to produce, *gabbas* also in 1938-39.⁶⁴ They used new blankets and new cotton lining. Whole of the blanket was covered with colourful embroidery and it was called *Purmatan*. Designs also were attractive.

LABOUR FORCE AND WAGES IN PREVIOUS TIMES

During the year 1938 the total labour force working in the industry was only 892 persons out of which 369 persons were partly dependent. Child labour was extensively used. The wages were paid according to piece-wage system. The wages differed according to the work done and the age of the worker, whether he was a child or an adult. Children were given the work of inferior type of embroidery for which not much training was required. The average wages earned by workers were⁶⁵:

Adult or child	Embroiderers	Applique Embroidery mixed	Applique or patch work cutters	Printers	Tailors
Adult	4 to 7 annas	5 to 8 annas	7 to 12 annas	8 to 12 annas	5 to 7 annas
Child	1.5 to 2 annas	2 to 3 annas	Nil	Nil	2 to 3 annas

It shows the wages of the embroidery workers were lower than those of applique workers. Patch work cutters and printers, relatively got better deal. Child labour, it appears was just abused. The adult worker also suffered. They generally fell into the trap of the *Khwaja* who helped them by providing loans which they were never able to repay. They also got loans from Cooperative Credit Societies. This was the position during the year 1938 which substantially changed subsequently.

NEW POLICY

Partition of the country and the Pakistani invasion of Kashmir created the same multi-dimensional problems for the *gabba* industry as in case of other cottage industries in Kashmir. The new Government which had the popular support drew up a plan for all the artisan industries tackling their macro problems of marketing, production, training, research and design and the financial assistance. For marketing a network of marketing organisation was established throughout the country under the leadership of Kashmir Government Arts Emporium. For helping in the augmentation of production and employment, a number of Demonstration-cum-Production centres were opened in all the districts of Kashmir valley. For popularising the particular craft by lending training to fresh cadres, training centres were opened. The *gabba* industry took full advantage of these facilities so much so that the production centres alone produced *gabbas* worth Rs. 28,500 in 1957-58.⁶⁶ Even from other sources the network of emporia, purchased *gabbas* valuing Rs. 5,900.⁶⁷ Besides, *gabbas* were sold in retail market in a substantial quantity.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The training facilities provided by the Government widened the base of the industry. The training was given in almost all the districts of Kashmir valley so that the people were able to pick up the craft every where. The position of these training centres, district wise, at the end of the Sixth Plan, 1983-84 was as under.⁶⁸

S. No.	Year	Srinagar TT C		Badgam TT C		Anantnag TT C		Pulwama TT C		Baramulla TT C		Kupwara TT C		Total TT C	
1.	End of Sixth Plan 1983-84	18	1	X	X	170	9	23	1	73	3	25	2	309	16

C = Centre, T.T. = Trainees trained.

As many as 16 centres were opened only for training persons in the *gabba*-making craft and about 309 persons were trained. Out of these centres 9 were located in Anantnag where this industry is mostly concentrated. The training programme encouraged the workers for taking up this craft. The programme had been started much earlier and the number of trained persons was much more in the cumulative sense.

PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT

Widening the base of the industry led to its expansion both in terms of increase in the number of production units and the employment potential. Position of number of production units and the persons employed in each unit in the year 1978-79 was⁶⁹:

S.No.	Industry	Srinagar/Badgam Units Emp.		Anantnag/Pulwama Units Emp.		Baramulla/Kupwara Units Emp.		Total Units Emp.	
1.	Gubba	30	202	137	679	77	382	244	1,263

GROSS VALUE ADDED

It was not only in terms of production units and employment that the industry had expanded but also in terms of making a contribution by adding to its gross value. The position by 1978 was⁷⁰:

S.No.	Industry	Consumption estimates of raw material (Rs. in lakh)	Value of output (Rs. in lakh)	Gross value added (Rs. in lakh)
1.	Gubba	5.44	43.29	37.85

The figures in the table confirm that the industry was in a healthy condition at the end of the fourth plan. By 1988-89, the industry had picked up further when the political uncertainty and violence gripped the Kashmir Valley.

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Chapter XII

EMBROIDERY, CREWEL AND SOZNI

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

The art of embroidery in ancient times originated with the women who wove embroidered hangings and veils for temples. Such veils were woven for temples in Egypt, India, Babylonia and Phoenicia. Greece and Rome were the recipients of this beautiful art from Phrygia. Mention of embroidered garments and needles had been made in Vedic texts. "It is found depicted at Ajanta where there are seen men wearing embroidered coats with diagonal stripes of geese or geometric bands attractive with floral ones". The earliest surveying embroideries are Scythian.² "Greeks depicted on vases, from 7th and 6th centuries B.C. and later are dressed in embroidered garments".

Peasants artistry is seen at its best in the brilliantly designed women's skirts and children's caps from Kutch. Dacca and Banaras are famous for *kasida* embroidery in gold, silver or *moonga* silk in darn and chain-stitch. *Kanthas* of Bengal also show the same richness and delicacy in their embroidery work. But the delicacy and deftness of the Kashmiri craftsmen is yet unrivalled in the world.⁴

In recent history the embroidery developed into an organised industry in Kashmir when production of *kani-shawl* declined to its lowest ebb and *Amlikar shawl* took its proud place. The master craftsman collected his pupil at a particular place, mostly at his home and allotted them work and guided them to produce fine pieces of embroidery on plain *pashmina* or *rafal* cloth. The workmanship and colour combination of a design attracted customers from far and wide. These shawls were also exported. The domestic market was widened due to the Swadeshi Movement all over India. Calcutta was the main market for the *Amlikar shawls*. By the time Maharaja Hari Singh took over as the Maharaja of Kashmir, there were about 3,000⁵ people working in the industry. Their economic condition was relatively better. The wages of the workers ranged between *annas* two to *annas* ten per day⁶ as per the quality of the work done.

Their conditions of the work were not as severe as those of *Shal-bafs* who could not move even from one *karkhana* to another. With the onset of the Great Depression, the industry received some setback. But with the Second World War the industry got a great fillip. During the war army personnel visited Kashmir on vacation and made purchases. By that time All India Spinners Association also had carried their work with missionary zeal. During the year 1940-41 the number of workers had gone up to 17,000 persons.⁷ Perhaps the number could have gone up further by 1943, had not the price of *pashmina* increased⁸ substantially.

Embroidery was not confined to *pashmina* and *rafal* only. It was done on silk, linen and drill.

SETBACK AND REVIVAL

After 1947 when India was declared independent, the embroidery industry again received a setback, partly because of the partition of the country, leading to a human tragedy and partly due to the attack on Kashmir engineered by Pakistan through tribesmen. The road and railway links of the State were cut off. No tourists visited Kashmir due to disturbed conditions. This led to the losing of markets inside and outside Kashmir. When the new Government under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah took over, they formulated a well considered policy for rejuvenating artisan industries in Kashmir. The first and foremost step which the Government took was to provide market to the suffocating artisan industries. This they did by laying a network of Emporia throughout the country under Government Arts Emporium. Among other arts and crafts, Kashmir embroidery formed one of the most important crafts of Kashmir and was displayed and sold through these emporia. The embroidery produced, in the production centres and purchased from private *karkhandars* was sold through these emporia. In the year 1957-58 the Emporia produced and purchased embroideries worth⁹:

<i>Produced in production centres</i>	<i>Purchased from others</i>
Rs. 8,69,633	Rs. 2,52,379

When Pearce Gervis, travelled in Kashmir about the time when the new Government had taken over, he visited the work place of one famous *karkhandar* Shah Mohammad on the bank of river Jehlum opposite Shah Hamdan Mosque. He wrote, "In another room there were several men, again most of them with grey beards and although wearing glasses, with their heads closed to their work, embroidering with coloured silks on a *pashmina* foundation shawl, although none was covering the whole of the square as has been the practice in the past, now only wide borders were made. At the back was a young man, who was drawing the design, on a cloth square with a pencil. At first the piece of material was stretched out flat on the floor and he sketched the main outline of the design, then holding it in his hand filled in the details, the embroiderer colouring it according to the order¹⁰." Gervice has very lucidly explained the actual working of the embroiderers at a work place at Srinagar, when the new Government was still contemplating how to improve and help the embroidery industry in Kashmir.

GOVERNMENT INPUTS AND GROWTH

The Government policy of encouraging the arts and craft industries by providing marketing facilities, establishing demonstration-cum-production centres, opening training centres, giving subsidies and linking the artisan industries with All India Boards enlarged the outlook of the artisans and craftsmen of Kashmir, and they made tremendous progress. The embroidery industry was no exception. Embroidery is a catalytic agent which is used not only in case of shawls but all sorts of ornamentation on any kind of cloth. It is an essential part of many artisan industries in Kashmir and co-exists with them e.g. *namda*, *gabba* or chain stitch. It was not, therefore, a surprise to see this industry making steady upward movement day in and day out. The production of embroidery work from the beginning of the Fifth Five Year Plan upto 1981-82 showed the following progress in value terms¹¹:

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Production (Rs. in crores)</i>	<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Production (Rs. in crores)</i>
1.	1974-75	0.18 + (0.05) = 0.23	5.	1978-79	0.67 + (0.17) = 0.84
2.	1975-76	0.21 + (0.06) = 0.27	6.	1979-80	0.80 + (0.20) = 1.00

3.	1976-77	$0.26 + (0.07) = 0.33$	7.	1980-81	$0.91 + (0.23) = 1.4$
4.	1977-78	$0.34 + (0.08) = 0.42$	8.	1981-82	$1.03 + (1.25) = 1.28$

(figures in brackets show the data for embroidery work)

The trend from the above table reveals that there was a consistently steady progress made by the industry between 1974-75 and 1981-82. Besides the domestic sales to the tune of Rs. 27.88 lakhs¹² of Rs. in 1989-90 through J & K Handicrafts Corporation, the industry had shown growth in its export trade also. Right from 1973-74, the export of embroideries had increased from 1.40 thousand quintals to 1.52 quintals in 1980-81.¹³ In terms of value the export of embroideries had shown following trend between 1978-79 to 1980-81¹⁴.

S.No.	Year	Exports (Rs. in crores)
1.	1978-79	$0.22 + (1.21) = 1.43$
2.	1979-80	$0.29 + (1.30) = 1.59$
3.	1980-81	$0.24 + (1.32) = 1.56$

(The figures in brackets shows the data for embroidery work)

Though embroidery is an auxiliary of shawl, silk and other basic industries, yet it had become so much wide-ranging and important that one is tempted to give it an independent identity. It has various types, needle work (*sozni*), crewel and chain stitch.

CREWEL WORK

Chain stitch in solid rows with cross filling in satin and button hole stitch is called crewel embroidery. "The fashion for crewel work, or worsted embroidery, dates largely from 17th century as does needle point, or canvas work."¹⁵ In Kashmir it is new dimension added to the beautiful types of embroidery already existing. It is mostly a decorative art. Elegant wall pieces, table covers, bed covers and other type of drawing room decorations are made in crewel embroidery.

Production and Employment

Crewel embroidery started producing on large scale from the late sixties of the present century. Its production and employment potential from 1974-75 can be evaluated from the following table.¹⁶

S. No.	Year	Production (Rs. in crores)	Employment (in lakhs)	S. No.	Year	Production (Rs. in crores)	Employment (Rs. in lakhs)
1.	1974-75	1.30	0.04	9.	1984-85	7.41	0.23
2.	1976-77	1.72	0.04	10.	1985-86	8.00	0.23
3.	1977-78	1.74	0.04	11.	1986-87	8.40	0.24
4.	1979-80	3.89	0.14	12.	1987-88	9.25	0.24
5.	1980-81	4.40	0.16	13.	1988-89	10.25	0.25
6.	1981-82	4.92	0.18	14.	1989-90	10.15	0.25
7.	1982-83	5.43	0.20	15.	1990-91	16.70	0.27
8.	1983-84	6.74	0.22	16.	1991-92	12.80	0.28

A steady increase in the production of crewel embroidery and increase in its employment shows that the craft had picked up with its growing popularity, year after year. The new Government also had encouraged the craft by popularizing it through Emporia opened in almost all the commercial centres of India and also exhibiting elegant embroideries through various exhibitions inside and outside the country.

Training Programmes

The craft was also encouraged by opening training centres in various districts of Kashmir valley. The district-wise position of training centres and trainees trained in the year 1983-84 and 1991-92 was as under¹⁷:

S. No.	Year	Srinagar C TT	Badgam C TT	Anantnag C TT	Pulwama C TT	Baramulla C TT	Kupwara C TT
1.	1983-84	12 232	9 210	7 141	5 80	6 116	2 50
2.	1991-92	13 180	14 350	7 112	5 34	6 140	3 50

C = Centres, TT = Trainees trained.

The craft of crewel work was popularized throughout the valley by giving training to the youth in all the districts. The training did not only provide trained artisans for improving the efficiency in the craft but also enlarged it to make supplies available for its growing demand for the Crewel work.

Exports

Crewel work was relatively a new craft and the items produced were very attractive. The products fascinated the foreign tourists which increased its demand outside the country. As would be observed, the value of exports doubled between Fourth and Fifth Five Year Plans and almost trebled at the end of Sixth Plan. The position of export in value terms from the end of Fourth Five Plan up to the end of Mid-Eighth Plan is given below¹⁸:

S.No.	Year	Value of exports (Rs. in crores)
1.	End of 4th Five Year Plan	1.26
2.	End of 5th Five Year Plan	2.80
3.	End of 6th Five Year Plan	3.39
4.	End of 7th Five Year Plan	0.73
5.	Mid-8th Five Year Plan	0.99

After progressing very fast up to the end of Sixth Five Year Plan there was a sudden fall in its production at the end of Seventh Plan, 1989-90. Obviously it was due to the chaotic conditions prevalent in Kashmir. The militancy had suddenly erupted causing de-stabilisation of the political and economic system. There was an atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity in which investors desisted from further investment.

Production Units and Employment

Earlier opening of production centres by the Jammu and Kashmir Arts Emporium had also given a fillip to the Industry. These centres acted not only as model centres for the craft but also gave

employment to the artisans. Various Government inputs encouraged people to take to this craft and vast number of production units were opened and only by 1978-79 the number of such units with the number of artisans working in them district wise is given in the following table:¹⁹

S.No.	Srinagar/Badgam Units/Employment	Anantnag/Pulwama Units/Employment	Baramula/Kupwara Units/Employment	Total Units/Emp.
1.	1,466 8,040	588 3,952	192 357	2,216 12,349

A craft which had only a recent origin and had begun to produce on a large scale from the sixties of the present century had by 1978-79 as many as 2,216 production units giving employment to 12,344 craftsmen. The number of production units could have been at a high level when the production value of the craft had reached a level of Rs. 6.74 crores in 1983-84 while it was only Rs. 1.74 crores at the beginning of 1978.²⁰ It is obvious that the employment in the industry also could have been at a higher level. Though crewel work is also part of embroidery, yet as a separate speciality it had contributed substantially. The amount of gross value it added to the value of its total output during the same year is given below:²¹

S.No.	Year	Consumption of raw material	Value of output (Rs. in lakhs)	Gross value added (Rs. in lakh)
1.	1978	59.06	337.62	278.56

Addition to the gross value by Rs. 278.56 lakh is not a humble performance. Out of a list of 22 arts, crewel embroidery ranks at third place, the first being carpet industry and second *sozni* embroidery so far as their contribution to the gross value is concerned. Carpet and *sozni* contribute Rs. 952.81 lakh and Rs. 596.31 lakhs respectively.

CHAIN STITCH

Chain stitch embroidery is done with woollen yarn on a *namda*, a rug, or a *gabba*. A hook type of needle or a *tambour* is used for such kind of embroidery in bold reliefs. Pearce Gervice on his visit to the work place of one Shah Mohammad observes, "In another corner boys were working chain stitch mats with the special loop needles which carry the stitch as would a machine. Again they were following over a drawn design; this being an exact copy of an extensive rug. Down stairs were the men who worked on *namdas*; these are floor coverings about three by four feet, the foundation being the pressed felt sometimes white, sometimes grey on which coloured wool designs are made; they are mostly crude but fill the demand made by cheap market and are more suited to the nursery or child's bedroom floor²²." The designs are generally floral. There are types of *gabbas* over which are worked in chain stitch embroidery to a drawn design. Traditional designs in very fast colour mostly floral or carpet type in soft colours also are worked with chain stitch needles. Both type are attractive and look elegant pieces of masterly art.

Chain Stitch a Qualitative Change

Hook work in embroidery was not something new in Kashmir. It existed earlier also. Introduction of chain stitch brought a qualitative change in the form and content of hook work embroidery. It is a twentieth century contribution. The chain stitch embroidery started with *namdas*. Plain *namda* felts were imported from Central Asia over which chain stitch designs were worked by the craftsmen in

Kashmir and then exported to Western countries in bulk. The *namdas* with chain stitch designs became very popular locally, in the country at large and the Western countries. The chain stitch embroidery was then extended to *gabbas* and rugs. The sale of the *gabbas* swelled in the manner the introduction of *amlakar-shawl* variety increased the sale of shawl specie. The chain stitch rugs proved a class in itself. Sometimes they looked better than carpets with beautiful designs and aesthetically rich colour combination.

Inputs from the Government

The induction of new Government after the partition of the country, brought revolutionary changes in Kashmir. The peasantry was delivered from the ageold feudal dispensation by transferring land to the peasants without compensation. The National Movement was committed to the welfare of the artisans also. So the Government formulated a comprehensive policy for the welfare of the artisans. The details of this policy have been discussed elsewhere in this work. In pursuance of the new policy chain stitch work also was displayed through the network of emporia and the national and international exhibitions. It was very much appreciated especially by foreigners. So the art became very popular and was in demand. To meet the growing demand with the help of Government inputs the investors made more and more investment to earn profits and the artisans worked hard to earn more. The progress made by chain-stitch activity within embroidery industry was consistent as can be very glaringly observed from the production value and the employment it provided to the people right from 1974-75 to 1988-89.²³

S. No.	Year	Production (Rs. in crores)	Employment (Rs. in lakhs)	S. No.	Year	Production (Rs. in crores)	Employment (Rs. in lakhs)
1.	1974-75	0.05	Neg.	9.	1984-85	0.50	0.01
2.	1976-77	0.07	0.001	10.	1985-86	0.60	0.02
3.	1977-78	8.08	0.001	11.	1986-87	0.60	0.03
4.	1979-80	0.20	0.01	12.	1987-88	1.30	0.03
5.	1980-81	0.23	0.01	13.	1988-89	2.10	0.03
6.	1981-82	0.25	0.01	14.	1989-90	2.05	0.03
7.	1982-83	0.28	0.01	15.	1990-91	2.25	0.03
8.	1983-84	0.45	0.01	16.	1991-92	2.40	0.04

The table very accurately reveals how this new craft in Kashmir started with humble beginnings. In the year 1974-75 the chain stitch worth Rs. 0.05 crores was produced with very less number of workers. Subsequently the production increased from Rs. 0.05 crores to Rs. 0.50 crores in 1984-85. It shows that both production and employment had increased ten fold—production from Rs. 5 lakhs to 50 lakhs and labour from 100 to 1,000 persons. By 1991-92 the production had increased up to Rs. 2 crores and 40 lakhs and labour to 4,000 persons. Both had increased almost four fold. Production value could have inflated due to rise in prices also. But on the whole the chain stitch activity has made excellent progress during this period. This activity had actually picked up with redoubled vigour from 1985-86 and it was the result of the cumulative effect of the Government policy which included the training input.

Training Input

There was extensive training programme launched by the Government in all the districts of Kashmir

valley for chain stitching craft. District wise position of training centres and trainees trained by 1983-84 and 1991-92 is given below²⁴:

S. No.	Year	Srinagar C TT	Badgam C TT	Anantnag C TT	Pulwama C TT	Baramulla C TT	Kupwara C TT
1.	1983-84	5 81	6 93	4 55	2 45	6 128	4 100
2.	1991-92	4 58	7 108	4 37	2 13	5 123	5 75

C = Centres, TT = Trainees trained.

According to this training programme about 24 training centres functioned between 1978-79 and 1991-92 in all the districts of the Kashmir valley. There were 494 persons trained in 1978-79 and 414 persons in 1991-92. At an average 454 persons received training every year between 1983-84 and the year 1991-92. In all at this rate, about 3,632 persons were trained in novel kind of embroidery work during this period. With the availability of trained work force, the craft was able to establish a wide base.

A good number of production units of this craft were established in various districts of the Kashmir valley. During 1978-79, Srinagar district alone had about 91 production units with 535 persons working in them.²⁵ Many more units were opened between 1989 and 90. Due to increase in production, both domestic sales and exports had increased. During 1989-90 domestic sales to the tune of Rs. 3.88 lakhs and exports worth Rs. 7.77 lakhs were made.²⁶ Even earlier during 1983-84 domestic sales worth Rs. 6.52 lakhs and exports worth Rs. 2.14 lakhs were made. J & K Corporation alone made domestic sales and exports to the tune of Rs. 7.36 lakhs and Rs. 5.63 lakhs respectively between 1983-84 and 1989-90.

Export of chain stitch between 1978 and 1991-92 had shown a phenomenal rise with its value going up from Rs. 22 lakhs worth of exports to Rs. 1.40 crores. Its steady and consistent growth in exports becomes clear from the following table:²⁷

S.No.	Year of export	Value of export	S.No.	Year of export	Value of export
1.	1978-79	0.22	8.	1985-86	0.80
2.	1979-80	0.29	9.	1986-87	1.03
3.	1980-81	0.24	10.	1987-88	0.49
4.	1981-82	0.30	11.	1988-89	1.00
5.	1982-83	0.26	12.	1989-90	3.21
6.	1983-84	0.74	13.	1990-91	1.29
7.	1984-85	0.67	14.	1991-92	1.40

There was a healthy growth of the chain stitch activity so much so that the value of exports increased from Rs. 0.22 crores in 1978-79 to 3.21 crores in 1989-90 almost about five-fold increase within 14 years. From 1990-91 onwards the exports started falling due to disturbed conditions in the valley of Kashmir. Chain Stitch rugs designed elegantly in sober colours were in great demand in the western countries because these rugs suited the aesthetic taste of the people in these countries. That was precisely the reason for their high demand in foreign countries and therefore the rise in the quantum of exports.



Wall Hangings in Crewel Works



A wall hanging in Chain Stitch



Wall decoration in Chain Stitch



A Design in Fine Sozni



A wall hanging in chain Stitch

SOZNI

Fine needle work is called *sozni*. It is mostly done on *pashmina*, *rafal* or silk cloth. *Sozni* became popular during Sikh times in Kashmir. Stress was given to more flower designs to cover whole surface of a shawl with fine needle work. Such shawls, with attractive needle work became very famous as *amlikars*. Unique designs were worked by artisans to produce fascinating pieces of art.

Contemporary Position

By now *sozni* is an established art in Kashmir. It is highly valued and involves tremendous effort, concentration and creative faculty of an embroiderer. A fine piece of *sozni* baffles its admirer whether it could be the work of human hands. "Here, there were four youngish men sitting and working with needles to material stretched on frames. The flower designs were dainty and colours blended perfectly, the stitch so small that it was difficult to separate. "The hand-worked pellet point work which comes out of Kashmir can stand against any rivals, and it was a joy to see here an industry which might not die with the workers, for those who sat in the workroom were young. It takes eight years of apprenticeship to reach perfection in the work...²⁸."

Setback and Revival

Like other crafts, *sozni* received a setback when the country was partitioned and Kashmir was attacked by Pakistan. With the coming of new Government and the formulation of new policy for the upliftment of cottage crafts and the artisans working in them, *sozni* also benefited. It was an important craft providing employment to a large number of craftsmen. With the general development of economy and the steps taken by Government to provide various facilities to Artisan industries, *sozni*, as an auxiliary of embroidery industry, made a lot of progress. One of the reasons for its horizontal expansion was the training programme launched by the Government; training centres were opened in all the districts of Kashmir valley. The number of such centres and the persons trained is given in the following table²⁹:

S. No.	Year	Srinagar C PT	Badgam C PT	Anantnag C PT	Pulwama C PT	Baramulla C PT	Kupwara C PT
1.	1983-84	21 437	12 140	6 83	4 45	8 180	7 75
2.	1991-92	20 309	9 132	5 22	4 72	7 70	7 —

C = Centres. PT = Persons Trained.

The table shows that in 1983-84, there were 58 training centres and in 1991-92 57 such centres were located in all the districts of the Kashmir valley. About 960 persons were trained in 1983-84 and 960 persons in 1991-92. At an average about 782 persons were being trained every year between 1983-84 and 1991-92. For these eight years only, about 6,256 persons were trained in *sozni* and they were spread all over the valley. The art of *sozni* was, therefore, introduced in all parts of Kashmir valley. Before 1983-84 the district-wise number of production units and the number of persons employed in them were³⁰:

S.No.	Year	Srinagar/Badgam Units/Employment		Anantnag/Pulwama Units/Employment		Baramulla/Kupwara Units/Employment		Total Units/Emp.	
1.	1978	9,332	2,951	119	490	617	2682	10,068	32,683

Out of a list of 22 handicrafts, the *sozni* had the highest number of production units functioning in 1978-79 employing 32,683 persons. It was the year when the training programme for the craft had not as yet picked up at the optimum level. But in 1981-82 embroidery alone worth 1.25 crores³¹ was produced in various production units in the Kashmir valley.³² At the end of the Eighth Five Year Plan the craft of *sozni* was the largest in Kashmir with tremendous employment potential.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Swarup, Shanti, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
2. *The New Encyclopaedia of Britannica*, Vol. 4, p. 471.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Swarup, Shanti, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
5. Kaul, Anand, *Geography*, cited. Banizari, *Socio-Economic History*, p. 199.
6. Bamzai, P.N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 200.
7. *Administration Report, op. cit.*, 1940-41, p. 111.
8. *Ibid.*, 1941-43, p. 117.
9. *Ibid.*, 1957-58, p. 226.
10. Gervice, Pearce, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
11. Gupta, Santosh, *J & K Handicrafts and Global Market*, Jammu, 1992; p. 45-46.
12. *Statistical Digest, op. cit.*, 1991-92; p. 150.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
14. Gupta, Santosh, *op. cit.*, p. 45-46.
15. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th Ed. Vol. 4, p. 471.
16. *Statistical Digest*, 1991-92, p. 141.
17. *Ibid.*, 1983-84 & 1991-92; PP. 125 and 146 respectively.
18. *Ibid.*, 1991-92, p. 142.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
20. See the table on Production and Employment on the previous page.
21. *Statistical Digest*, 1991-92. p. 156.
22. Gervis, Pearce, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-41.
23. *Digest of Statistics, op. cit.*, 1991-92, p. 141.
24. *Ibid.*, 1991-92 and 1983-84; PP. 146 & 125 respectively.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
27. *Ibid.*, 1991-92; p. 142.
28. Gervis, Pearce, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
29. *Statistical Digest, op. cit.*, 1983-84 and 1991-92, pp. 145 and 148 respectively.
30. *Ibid.*, 1991-92.
31. Major portion of the total production value was of *Sozni*.
32. Gupta, Santosh, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

Chaper XIII

PAPIER-MACHE, WOOD CARVING AND OTHER CRAFTS

AN ELEGANT ART

Due to its sensational colours, designs and excellent craftsmanship, papier-mache has become very popular. In the year A.D. 1916 there were only 150 craftsmen producing papier-mache but now (1989) there are about 1,000 families involved in the craft, though all are not as much skilled. Papier-mache had already established its clout in the previous century. It had found much coveted niches in the 19th century art exhibitions in Europe. Rudyard Kipling in one of his short stories made a mention of 'palinquin of un-chastened splendour-rich with Papier mache of Cashmere'. The German art historian William Lubke praised the Maharaja of Kashmir for the handsome, painted and lacquered barges and boats at Srinagar. On her travel to Kashmir Hanoria Lawrence praised the litter which was sent for her from the valley as 'painted and gilded like a Lord Mayor's coach'.

COMPLICATED PROCESS OF MAKING PAPIER-MACHE

The process of papier-mache making in Kashmir is long and complicated. It begins with a potter or a carpenter. Introduction of inferior and cheap stuff papier-mache made of wood is a recent development. It is difficult for the eye to detect, but the weight of the article exposes the distortion. The potter or the carpenter gives a shape to a vase or a box or whatever the article to be produced. A genuine papier mache worker first soaks the paper in a tank for about a night and then pounds it next day with poles in mortar. It changes into pulp of grey colour. Then rice paste or glue is added to the material. The object shaped by the potter is then covered with the strips of paper and paper paste is smoothly spread all around the object. Again it is covered with thin muslin or paper and then the pulp. Sometimes three such layers are interposed one upon the other. After getting satisfied about the desirable size and shape of the pot, it is dried hard. It is then sawn into pieces to suit the required shape when these are joined together. The pieces of the mould are removed and the papier-mache pieces are glued together. The glued parts are held together with the pressure caused by small sacks of sand. The new product, then produced is covered with strips of fine muslin and painted with *gutch*. *Gutch* is derived by mixing old wall plaster, water and glue. The pot after drying is made smooth by rubbing it all round with a hard burnt brick. An efficient craftsman adds one more process by applying what he calls *aster* made by rubbing a special type of stone from *mansbal* with water. Over this coating, *safeda kashgri* is applied. *Safeda kashgri* is a mix of white powder, glue and water. The thing is then ready for painting. The ground for working design, is painted 'either gold, white lead, verdigris, ultramarine or cochineal'. The designer, then, draws the design with *zarda*, yellow colour staining with *aster* spaces for flowers,

etc. The designer is called a *nakash*. He draws the fascinating designs in free hand, without using any geometrical instruments. The designs are accurate to the minutest details.

Designs

Designs are mostly traditional. There are families who have specialised in certain designs from centuries which they do not teach their close circle. Certain techniques are also kept a guarded secret. Mostly the designs are the patterns which adopt flowers, foliage, birds and butterflies as their content. Classification is done according to Persian tradition—*gulbazara* meaning a thousand flowers *Gul-under-gul* meaning flower upon flower or *Gulivilayati* meaning foreign flowers as liked by the *memsahibs*. Actually it is a design which is of Persian origin, therefore a foreign pattern.

Boost and Setback

The Second World War had given a boost to the commercial crafts in Kashmir; this was due to the influx of tourists, especially the defence personnel into the valley. Papier-mache worth Rs. 2,00,000³ was produced which increased to Rs. 2,50,000⁴ in the following year. About 600 persons⁵ were employed in 1940-41. It had suffered a setback during the Great Depression and the following years. The craft was once again de-stabilised when the country was partitioned and Pakistan organised an attack on Kashmir. Loss of markets posed the main problem for all the cottage crafts of Kashmir valley. These industries languished for about a year till arrangements for making market available for the products of these industries were made. This pioneering job was done by the Government headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

New Policy

The National Conference Government was committed to the welfare of the artisans and they wanted to redeem their pledge. A comprehensive plan for the improvement and progress of artisan industries was drawn. The main points of this policy were to provide marketing facilities, popularising the crafts through exhibitions, providing employment and training facilities, giving financial assistance and freeing the artisan from the tyranny of the *vostakars*. This policy led to establishing of marketing network throughout the country, opening of demonstration-cum-production centres, opening training centres in districts, giving subsidies and encouraging Artisan Cooperative to break the monopoly of *vostakars*. The Papier-mache industry took full advantage of these facilities made available by the popular Government.

Training Programmes

Training facility was taken full use of by the papier-mache industry. Training centres were opened in four districts of the valley. Following were the number of training centres established and the number of people trained. The training programme had actually been started as far back as 1976-77 and the number of these centres had increased in a phased manner. The position in 1991-92 was as under⁶:

S. No.	Srinagar C PT	Badgam C PT	Anantnag C PT	Pulwama C PT	Baramulla C PT	Kupwara C PT
1.	7 36	8 85	— —	1 6	2 48	— —

C = Centres, TT = People Trained.

Production and Employment

These training centres had not only popularised the craft but had also improved it. With the elaborate marketing facilities inside and outside the country, the number of production units and the number of persons employed, in them, had increased. The following table shows the position in 1978-79.⁷

S.No.	Name of the Industry	Srinagar Units/Emp.	Anantnag Units/Emp.	Baramulla Units/Emp.	Total Units/Emp.
1.	Papier-mache	710 1,745	— —	67 247	777 1,992

The table shows that the number of production units had gone up to 777 in various districts. The demand for the Papier-mache had actually increased due to the attractive display of the fascinating products of this careful craft through various exhibitions and the branches of emporia all over India. Increase in demand had led to increase in production. How the production and employment increased steadily right from the end of Fourth Five Year Plan, 1974-75 up to 1991-92 is given below⁸:

S. No.	Year	Production (Rs. in crores)	Employment (Rs. in lakhs)	S. No.	Year	Production (Rs. in crores)	Employment (Rs. in lakhs)
1.	1974-75	0.33	0.01	9.	1984-85	0.97	0.05
2.	1976-77	0.47	0.01	10.	1985-86	2.00	0.05
3.	1977-78	0.55	0.01	10.	1986-87	2.00	0.05
4.	1979-80	0.97	0.02	12.	1987-88	3.15	0.06
5.	1980-81	1.11	0.03	13.	1988-89	4.25	0.06
6.	1981-82	1.25	0.03	14.	1989-90	4.20	0.06
7.	1982-83	1.39	0.03	15.	1990-91	4.50	0.06
8.	1983-84	1.79	0.04	16.	1991-92	4.55	0.07

The figures establish, beyond doubt, that the industry had made tremendous progress steadily and consistently from the year 1974-75 to 1991-92. The value of production had gone up from Rs. 33 lakhs to Rs. 4.55 crores in 1991-92. It had increased almost 14 times. The employment had increased from one thousand workers to seven thousand workers in 1991-92 a seven fold increase. Production value had increased twice the employment. But higher rate of increase in the production value could be attributed to the rise in price level, otherwise there is rational correlation between the two.

Exports

The progress in the production level had not only increased its sales in the domestic market but also in foreign market. The volume of exports also had shown an increasing trend as can be judged from the following table⁹:

(Rs. in crore)

S.No.	Year of export	Value of export	S.No.	Year of export	Value of export
1.	1974-75	1.31	10.	1984-85	2.03

2.	1976-77	2.10	11.	1985-86	2.40
3.	1977-78	1.96	12.	1986-87	2.10
4.	1978-79	1.61	13.	1987-88	1.80
5.	1979-80	1.90	14.	1988-89	2.48
6.	1980-81	1.85	15.	1989-90	0.54
7.	1981-82	1.50	16.	1990-91	1.82
8.	1982-83	1.65	17.	1991-92	8.27
9.	1983-84	2.22			

The figures in the table show that except in the year 1976-77, the value of the exports of Papier-mache has remained consistent between 1974-75 and 1982-83. For the following four years, 1983-84 to 1986-87, it has increased substantially. Between 1987-88 and 1990-91 the year 1989-90 shows a tremendous drop up to the level of 0.54 crores from Rs. 2.40 crores in the year 1985-86. The reason has been the sudden eruption of militancy de-stabilising the economic and political system in Kashmir. Foreign tourist traffic also had come to a grinding halt. The rule of the gun prevailed in the valley. However the exports shot up to unprecedented level of Rs. 8.27 crores in the year 1991-92 because of Government efforts to help in exporting arts and crafts—the artisan having been placed in a precarious position.

The exports did not increase only in value terms but in absolute terms of the weight of goods exported. In terms of value the interference of price fluctuations do not give a clear picture though it can gauge the trend. In terms of weight, the export of papier mache goods made in 1973-74 was about 0.40 thousand quintals. It swelled to 2.43 thousand quintals in the year 1991-92.¹⁰ Here also we find that there has been six-fold increase in exports. Again during the years 1989-90 and 1990-91 the exports have fallen to the level of 0.19 and 0.23 quintals respectively.¹¹ The drop is again due to eruption of militancy in Kashmir during these years.

The papier-mache craft had reached a prosperous state in the year 1991-92. Out of all the important arts and crafts of Kashmir, papier-mache had second position in the rupee value of exports, fourth position in employment of artisans and fifth position in the rupee value of production in the year 1991-92.¹² Its position had been enviable.

WOOD CARVING

History

Wooden architecture has been the ancient tradition in Kashmir. Rajtarangini would testify to the existence of timber structures of huge dimensions in various towns of ancient Kashmir. With the profused use of wood had developed the carving skill. Buddhist Pagodas in China have been influenced in their design and carvings from Kashmir's tradition in the field. "A specimen of the ancient Kashmir wood worker's art is preserved to this day in the monastery at Alchi in Ladakh where richly carved wood has been profusedly employed. In front of the temple, there is a verandah with substantial wooden pillars surmounted by beautifully carved capitals on which there is a cornice similarly ornamented. Above this are smaller pillars and arches with trefoil design and images of Buddha and Buddha saints. The doors too have very broad frames which are carved in Kashmiri style¹³." It was during the time of Zain-ul-Abidin that art of wood carving was reborn. That great king, as in case of other crafts, invited wood carving experts from outside the country to teach the craft to his people.

During the Second World War trade and commercial activity got a fillip after a decade of depressed activity in commercial arts following Great Depression. The craft of wood carving also picked up especially due to the influx of defence personnel enjoying holidays in Kashmir. This provided ready made market for the fascinating items in wood carving. "Fine artistic articles of walnut wood for which Kashmir is famous maintained their popularity"¹⁴ during the years 1941-43. Like all other arts and crafts of Kashmir wood carving also received a setback when the country was partitioned and Kashmir was attacked by Pakistan resulting in the loss of market.

Use of Walnut Wood

Fine wood-carving is done on walnut wood in Kashmir, the supply of which is sufficient enough for its demand. This variety of wood is suitable for fine carving. The wood is veined and of various shades. It is hard and suits to the knife of the craftsman and the cloth of the polisher. The process of carving begins with the careful selection of a piece of wood. And then the artist draws a design in free hand. The contours of the design are carved by his assistant. The fine details are, then, worked by the master-craftsman himself with exceptional skill and proficiency. The knives of different shapes are used for different types of work, hallowing, undercutting or levelling. The goods produced are almost the same as produced in Nineteenth Century except that some new innovations in certain cases have been introduced. Cigarette cases with springs throwing cigarette into the mouth and table lamps of lotus design with its petals opening to unfold the bulb etc. are the novel things. Lot many innovations have been introduced. Folding tables, bookshelves and other cute articles of daily use are produced. Other development had been that the wood carvers had learnt to 'stunt' pieces. The designs in their form are of three types; raised, hollowed and incised. In their content they represent the flora and fauna of Kashmir and its geometrical patterns.

Encouragement from the Government

Between the years 1947-49 the wood-carving industry continued to be in a state of stagnation for want of markets and other facilities. But the policy of the new Government had started bearing fruit at the end of 1949 when various branches of the Government Arts Emporium conducted bulk sales of various arts and crafts of Kashmir. The volume of sales made is given in tabular form¹⁵:

S.No.	Branches	Own Stock	Consignment Stocks (Value in Rs.)
1.	Delhi Emporium	2,06,392	1,18,036
2.	Bombay Emporium	99,798	42,502
3.	Simla Emporium	8,678	8,678
4.	Srinagar Emporium	29,413	29,137
	Total	3,42,281	1,98,353

These sales had swelled to Rs. 22,48,215 and Rs. 7,25,435 in 1957-58 from emporia own and consignment stocks respectively.¹⁶ It was almost six-fold increase in case of Emporiums' own stocks and more than three fold increase in consignment stocks.

An effective outlet of sales through the network of emporia was an eye opener for the depressed cottage industries of Kashmir. By then tourists also had started trickling to Kashmir. During 1951 about 10.58 thousand tourists visited Kashmir.¹⁷ The demand for arts and crafts had increased including exquisitely beautiful wood carving of Kashmir. Apart from other inputs from the state Government, All

India Small Scale Industries Board approved a scheme relating to wood carving in 1954-55.¹⁸ The scheme gave a great boost to the Industry. As in case of other cottage industries the State Government had opened demonstration-cum-production centres for wood carving also. These centres had improved the skill in the craft, besides giving employment to the craftsmen. Wood carving worth Rs. 53,974 were produced in the production centres of Arts Emporium alone in the year 1957-58 besides goods worth Rs. 54,808 and Rs. 1,09,724 purchased and received on consignment respectively.¹⁹

Training Programmes

A comprehensive training programme for the craftsmen of important Cottage Industries of Kashmir was started from 1976-77 by the State Government. Wood carving was one of such important industries. In the year 1983-84 wood carving alone had 15 training centres with 43 apprentices.²⁰ The district wise number of training centres and people trained in 1991-92 was as under²¹:

S. No.	Year	Srinagar C PT	Badgam C PT	Anantnag C PT	Pulwama C PT	Baramulla C PT	Kupwara C PT
1.	1991-92	2 49	10 97	1 22	— —	1 25	1 —

C = Centres. PT = People Trained.

Even though the total number of training centres in 1991-92 had continued to be only 15 but the number of trainees trained that year was 193 while it was only 47 in 1983-84. It shows that the craftsmen had taken interest in their training. If the average number of trainees trained from 1983-84 to 1991-92 was 120 trainees each year, the total number trained by the end of 1991-92 could be (120 x 6) 720 craftsmen. Such a good number of trained craftsmen could not have only made improvements in the craft but also widened the base of the Industry spreading over various districts of the valley.

Number of Units, Production and Employment

There was enormous growth of production units with a good number of people working in them at the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan (1978-79). The district wise position was²²:

S. No.	Type of Activity	Srinagar/Badgam Units/Emp.	Anantnag/Pulwama Units/Emp.	Baramulla/Kupwara Units/Emp.	Total Units/Emp.
1.	Wood-carving	320 2,114	27 47	9 138	356 2,299

Establishment of 356 units of production in one craft is not a humble achievement. Wood carving products worth Rs. 0.67 crores had been produced during 1974-75 which increased up to Rs. 1.0 crores by 1981-82 and to Rs. 5.81 crores in 1991-92. The employment generated for the same period was 0.02 lakh persons in 1974-75, 0.03 lakh in 1981-82 and 0.07 lakh in 1991-92. The year wise detail of the value of production and employment generated is given in the following table:²³

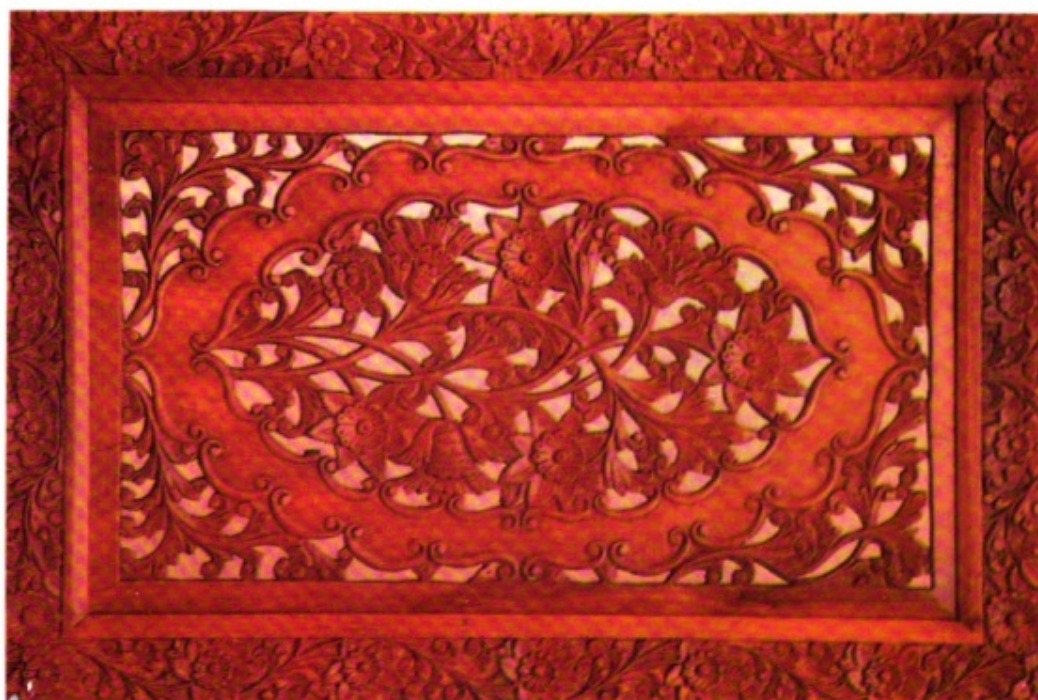
S.No.	Year	Wood carving Production/Emp.	S.No.	Year	Wood carving Production/Emp.
1.	1974-75	0.67 0.02	9.	1984-85	2.53 0.03
2.	1976-77	0.85 0.02	10.	1985-86	3.00 0.04



Flower Vases in Papier Mache



Wall decoration in Papier mache



Beautiful decoration in Wood Carving





A Specimen in Wood Carving Design

3.	1977-78	0.93	0.02	11.	1986-87	3.15	0.04
4.	1979-80	0.91	0.02	12.	1987-88	4.25	0.01
5.	1980-81	0.96	0.03	13.	1988-89	5.40	0.05
6.	1981-82	1.01	0.03	14.	1989-90	5.35	0.05
7.	1982-83	1.96	0.03	15.	1990-91	5.65	0.06
8.	1983-84	2.30	0.03	16.	1991-92	5.81	0.07

An examination of the table reveals that there has been eight-fold increase in production and more than three-fold increase in employment from 1974-75 to 1991-92. Interestingly, there has not been much progress during the Fifth Five Year Plan. While employment remained static, production increased just by Rs. 24 lakhs. During the Seventh and Eighth Five Year Plans, production increased to the level of Rs. 2.53 and Rs. 5.35 crores respectively. Undoubtedly, it was a substantial increase.

Exports

Production worth Rs. 5.81 crores of wood carving required huge demand and a vast market. An analysis of the marketing conditions shows that this craft had become very popular in foreign countries and the major portion of the volume of production was exported from the country and only an insignificant part of the total production was sold in domestic market. The rupee value of goods exported from 1974-75 up to the year 1991-92 showed the following trend²⁴:

S.No.	Year of Export	Value of Export (in crores)	S.No.	Year of export	Value of Export (in crores)
1.	1974-75	1.25	10.	1984-85	1.69
2.	1976-77	1.70	11.	1985-86	2.00
3.	1977-78	1.00	12.	1986-87	1.60
4.	1978-79	0.62	13.	1987-88	1.70
5.	1979-80	1.30	14.	1988-89	1.49
6.	1980-81	1.32	15.	1989-90	0.61
7.	1981-82	1.10	16.	1990-91	0.47
8.	1982-83	1.52	17.	1991-92	5.09
9.	1983-84	1.85			

The table shows that the value of exports had increased fourfold from 1974-75 to 1991-92. Total exports made in 1991-92 were 5.09 crores. Comparing to the total production of Rs. 5.81 crores in the same year only a balance of Rs. 72 lakhs worth wood carving was left to be sold in the domestic market. During 1983-84 about 19.27 lakhs worth wood carving was sold in the domestic market²⁵ by the J & K Handicrafts Corporation which had increased to only Rs. 22.02 lakhs in the year 1989-90.²⁶ If the balance left for domestic sale was Rs. 72 lakhs in 1991-92, the proportion is not incompatible. Except a few aberrations, exports from 1974-75 has shown steady and consistent trend. Of course the exports have fallen to lowest level during 1989-90 and 1990-91; the cause being militancy in Kashmir.

The increase in rupee value of exports could present a distorted picture, value being dependent on fluctuating price level. But examining the volume of exports on the basis of the weightages of goods

exported takes us to the same conclusion, that the exports had maintained an increasing trend up to 1989. During the year 1973-74 about 4.50 thousand quintals of wood carving were exported and it increased to 4.76 thousand quintals in 1980-81 and then fell to 0.63 and 0.11 thousand quintals in 1989-90 and 1990-91 respectively due to the same reason.

THE MAN BEHIND THE CRAFT

No doubt, the consistent Government policy of organising the handicraft industries on sound footing and providing marketing facilities inside and outside country led to this progress. But ultimately it was the intelligent man behind the craft who worked hard to produce fascinating art work. He put in his blood and sweat in the craft and very meticulously worked every detail of the design. "No one can deny that with their fine embroidery work, their delightful blending of colours in their painting of papier-mache and their wood carving, the Kashmiri is an artist able to convey on cloth, paper and wood the beauties with which he is surrounded by nature and of which lovely things he is truly conscious and appreciative proof that familiarity has not dulled his vision to that which he lives amongst all times. It is as if his one great desire is to let the whole world know of the joys that are his and to share with rest of mankind all his colour and beauty²⁷."

SILVER WORK

Like other delicate crafts of Kashmir, silver work is extremely beautiful.²⁸ "Kashmir is well-known for its parcel gilt silver ware. *Surahi*, a water goblet of very ancient and graceful form is a very famous Kashmir product. It has been widely praised.²⁹"

Craftsmen produce variety of articles like tea and coffee sets of various forms, tea caddies, toilet sets and even combs. Trays, plates, fruit dishes, bowls and tumblers of exquisite quality are produced. Certain models, typically Kashmiri like house boat, kangri, chinar leaf and lotus flower are also produced.

ORNAMENT MAKING

Ornament making has been an ancient craft in Kashmir. The craftsmen have accumulated experience of centuries in this field. Women, even girls in their teens wear silver ornaments especially among Muslims. "On any day you will see the little girls, many of them in arms, wearing the unique silver pieces which cover the head. They are made up of a number of cut-out silver medallions held together like chain armour, with a fringe of tiny darts falling over the forehead, the more delicate of these being shaped like fishes³⁰..." Silver ornaments of common use are bangles and ear-rings (*Jhumkas*), necklaces, bracelets, anklets, amulets, head-bands, rings and rosaries.

The designs are widely traditional and represent the Kashmir environment. But the craftsmen are able to create such designs as are suitable to oriental as well as European taste. The work is smooth and uniform. Patterns of small springs of leaves covering a vessel are drawn in relief. Most of the designs are shawl patterns. Designs are also expressed in filigree work. Lahasa style of expressing motifs in Tibetan character are also adopted by silver Smiths in Kashmir. While sitting on the floor, the silver Smith incises a design on the plain silver with unsophisticated tools — a chisel, a hammer and a file. Silver is procured from other parts of the country. Previously silver smiths also used to melt silver rupees to meet their part requirement. Kashmir silver Smiths have the technique of obtaining a unique type of white sheen to silver ware. It is obtained by boiling silverware in apricot juice. The white sheen, it is believed, gets spoiled when polished and used for some period of time. The polished portion gets tarnished, but the engraved part still looks white because this part is not affected by the liquid silver polish. Perhaps the wares would look gracefully beautiful and white if these were not

Kashmir. "The delicate foliated scrolls deeply graven through gilding the dead white silver below, give the object, an indecent pearly bloom."³¹

During the Second World War, the silverware industry made a lot of progress. The demand for silverware far exceeded its supply. Some of the silver articles could compete with foreign made wares very successfully. In the year 1941 about 1000 craftsmen including their dependents were employed³² in the industry and in 1943 the number rose to 1,100³³ workers. "The finish and turnover of the silverware produced in the state continued to show improvement",³⁴ even in the year 1943. The demand for silverware continued to rise in spite of the rise in the price of silver. The industry had to experience the export manpower deficiency. It somehow coped up with the difficult situation.

Local Demand

Silver ornaments of Kashmir have a lot of local demand. It was not, therefore, affected in a big way during the year 1947 and 1949 due to the partition of the country and the invasion from Pakistan. The setback was to the extent that the industry lost its market outside the state. Also the tourists could not visit the state nor the goods could be sent outside Kashmir. There could have been some difficulties in the supply position of the white metal. The short and long-term policies of the new Government helped this industry, the same way as in case of other artisan industries. The result was that it picked up very fast. One year after the end of First Five Year Plan, the business done in silverware through various arts emporia was to the tune of Rs. 9,289 from their own production stocks besides Rs. 1,888 from the purchased stocks and Rs. 1,78,579 from the stocks consigned to them.³⁵ But the bulk of sales were made by the silver smiths to the local populace in the valley of Kashmir and it was in healthy condition.

COPPER WARE

Another metal-ware extant in Kashmir is copperware. *Surahis*, jugs, *tashtaries* (mobile handwashing basins), *tramies* (rice-eating plates), *toore* (rice eating bowls), *degchees* (big rice cooking pots), *sarposh* (lids for *tramies*), ladles, *samavars* (kettle for preparing tea), *lotas* (water tumbler) and *huqqas* (hubble-bubble) are the things of common use produced by copper smiths. There is a specific bazar at Srinagar where these things are made amidst a lot of din and also sold to the customers. Workmen sit by the side of fire and work with ordinary tools-hammer and chisel. For blowing the fire they use a unique methodology. A pot shaped like a she-duck, which they call *batich* is filled with water and placed on fire. It generates steam which escapes through its beak type nozzle. The nozzle being very narrow causes pressure and the steam comes out with force. The workman carries this unique instrument in his left hand and uses it as and when required pointing the nozzle towards the direction where he wants to use it.

Electroplating in the industry had been introduced way back in the last quarter of the 19th century. Fine copperwares were produced by craftsmen to subject these to electroplating. These articles looked elegant. In the last quarter of the 19th century a large demand had arisen for the beautiful copper trays framed as tables in carved walnut wood.³⁶

Designs

Craftsmen are innovative in their design work. They can adopt any design. Filigree type is common on drinking vessels. The designs over the lids of ornamental rice plates are raised and look pleasing to the eye. Tea pots and bowls from Tibet, Yarkand and Kashgar have been copied. It has become almost a fashion here, to bury these pots under earth so that these could look aged having been produced during the important periods of history. They try to sell these as antiques to fetch fabulous prices.

High Local Demand

Demand for copper utensils within Kashmir valley is always there. The utensils which are commonly used by the Muslim population are all made of copper. It is not, therefore, that much damage is done to this industry during the periods of war or other crises for loss of markets. The people living in rural areas who had been using earthen pots are now fast adopting to copper ware. This process has been augmented, precisely because of the better economic conditions of the peasantry after the land was transferred to tillers without paying any compensation and the inputs which the Government provided to the peasantry for improving the yield per acre of land which has already increased substantially. Due to the expansion of demand, the copper industry is flourishing everyday. The industry is progressing despite the increase in the price of copper.

LEATHER

Leather, it appears, was used by the people from ancient times. There is a Chinese evidence to show that people used leather doublets during seventh century A.D.³⁷ There is the mention of leather tanners as a class in *Rajtarangini*.³⁸ Ksemendra also refers to water leather bags being a part of *kayastha* officers luggage. Kalhana refers to about a hundred *dinara* as the wage for mending a leather shoe or a leather whip.³⁹ During the time of Pathan Rule in Kashmir, the leather industry got a fillip. Pathans preferred cavalry to infantry. So there was lot of demand for saddles. Specialisation in the production of saddles got great boost and this speciality of the industry established a distinct identity.

Curing Local Leathers

Leather goods made in Kashmir consume two types of leather. One is imported from Khorasan⁴⁰ and the other is the local brand. The leather imported is called Yeark leather.⁴¹ Local leather is collected by a class of people called *doombs*. After collecting this leather, it is cured. The skins are first cleaned and then, placed in a vat full of clean water. A layer of pounded galls are put between the two skins. Then a worker is employed to tread them at least for eight hours daily. This process is continued for 25 days with the addition of fresh galls after every fifth day. These are then, hung for drying. After this starts the process of rubbing under the sunshine. The grain side is rubbed with the paste of Armenian bole. The flesh side is scrapped. Mutton suet is applied till the leather is saturated. After drying once again, it is put in water and trodden. It is polished and brought into finished state. Curing of local leather was banned during Sikh times.⁴² But subsequently the ban was lifted by Governor Mian Singh.⁴³

Local leather is used for producing articles like shoes, *pazars* and *kufas* — ladies' slippers. The Yeark leather, on the other hand is strong solid and paliable. It does not develop cracks. Saddles are made of this leather. "A fabric of much greater importance to Great Britain than that of damasked sword-blades, is that of Yeark leather, or leather suited for saddlery."⁴⁴

FURS

Trade in furs is one of the complementary identities of the leather industry in Kashmir. Those dealing in furs depend on sportsmen for the supply of different kinds of furs. But the latest movement in defence of environment, not only in India but the world over, has almost brought this industry of Kashmir to a halt. But on the whole the leather industry has made tremendous progress since the middle of this century when democratic Government was established in Kashmir. How much has the leather industry (inclusive of fur) progressed from 1974-75 till 1991-92 in terms of rupee value of production and employment is shown in the following table:⁴⁵

leather industry (inclusive of fur) progressed from 1974-75 till 1991-92 in terms of rupee value of production and employment is shown in the following table:⁴⁵

S. No.	Year	Production (Rs. in crores)	Employment (Rs. in lakhs)	S. No.	Year	Production (Rs. in crores)	Employment (Rs. in lakhs)
1.	1974-75	0.18	0.0003	9.	1984-85	1.28	0.03
2.	1976-77	0.26	0.004	10.	1985-86	1.50	0.03
3.	1977-78	0.34	0.005	11.	1986-87	1.57	0.03
4.	1979-80	0.80	0.01	12.	1987-88	N.A.	0.03
5.	1980-81	0.91	0.02	13.	1988-89	1.57	0.03
6.	1981-82	1.03	0.02	14.	1989-90	1.60	0.04
7.	1982-83	1.14	0.02	15.	1990-91	1.80	0.04
8.	1983-84	1.16	0.02	16.	1991-92	1.97	0.04

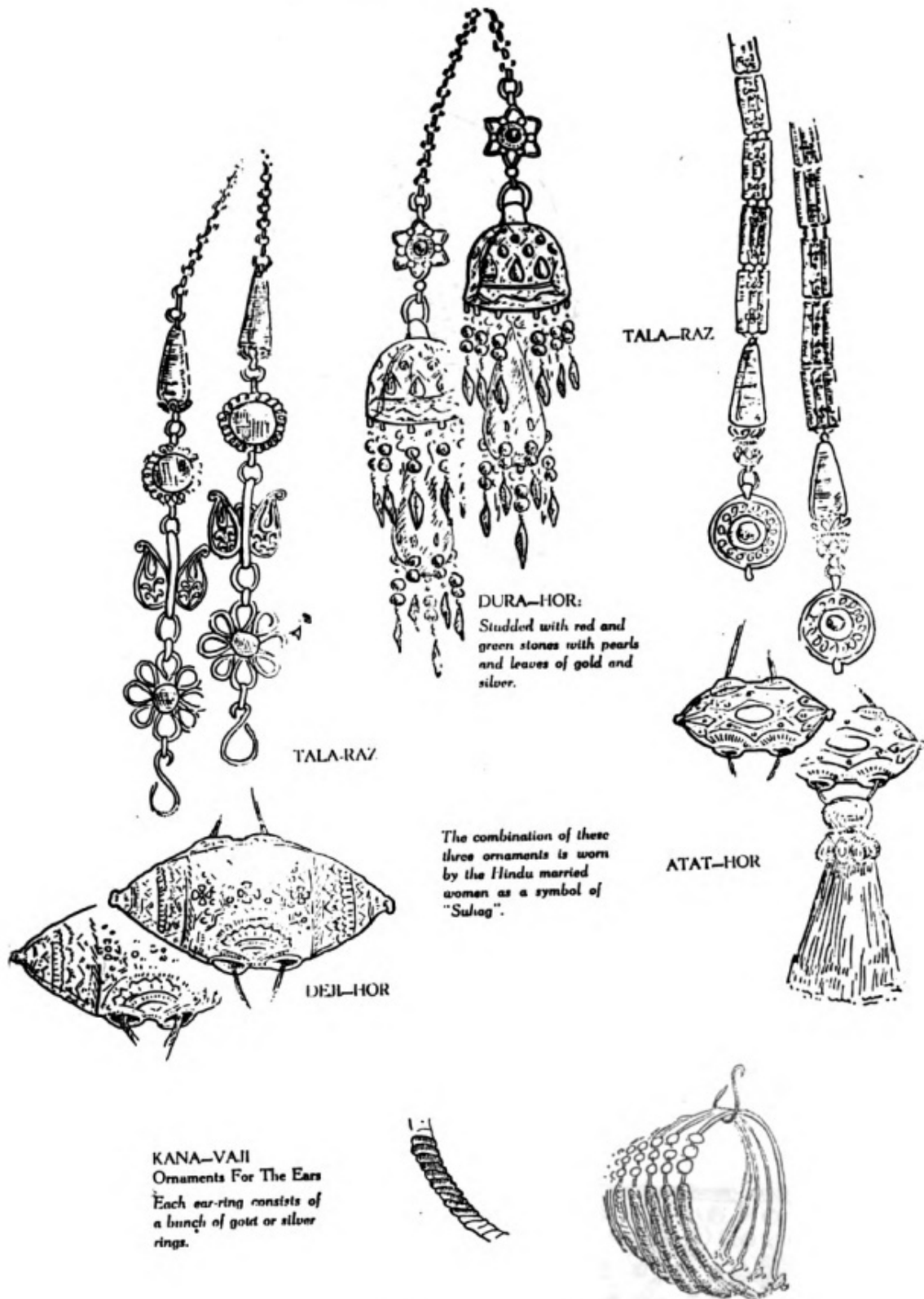
The figures show that the production value from 1974-75 to 1991-92 has increased eleven times and employment more than thirteen times.

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2. Gervis, Pearce, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
3. *Administration Report, op. cit.*, 1940-41, p. 112.
4. *Ibid.*, 1941-43, p. 118.
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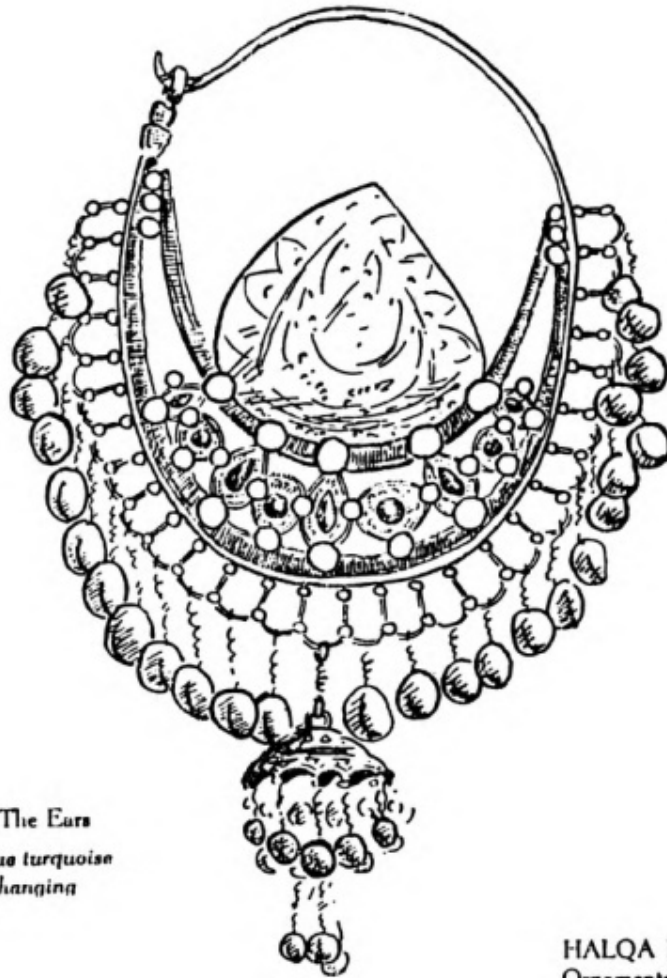
Traditional Jewellery and Ornaments*



*Courtesy: P.N. Kachru

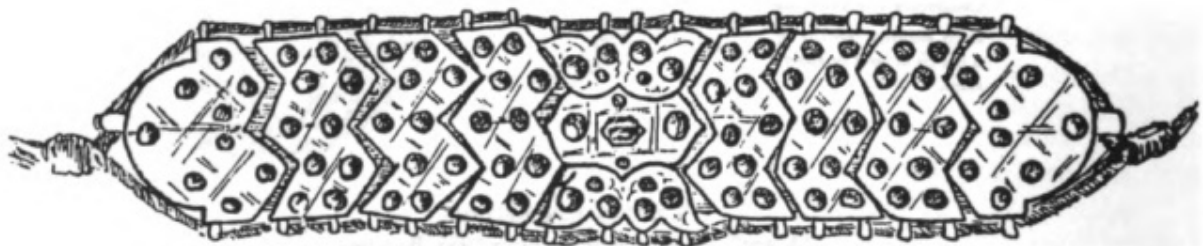
"Marg"—Heritage of Kashmir 1955. Bombay

Drawings from the items on display at S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar



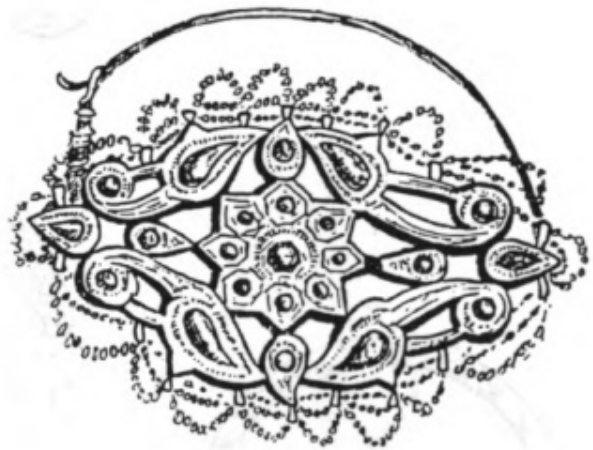
BALA:
Ornaments For The Ears
*Studded with blue turquoise
with a fringe of hanging
gold balls.*

HALQA BAND:
Ornaments For The Neck
*Gold and Silver studded
with red and green stones
and sometimes mirrors.*

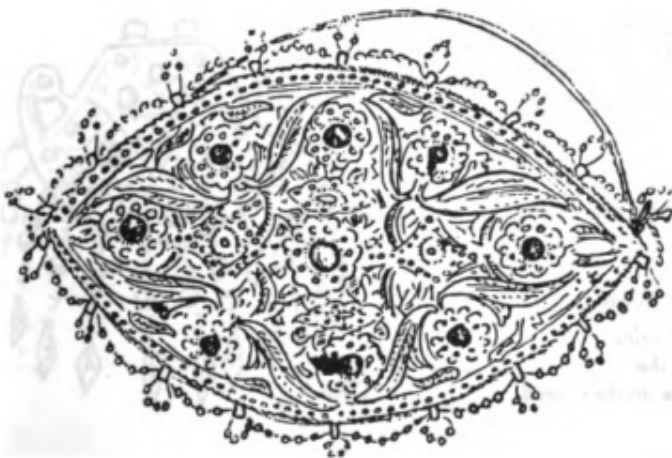




Ornaments For The Neck



KANA-VAJI
Ornaments For The Ears
*Studded with coloured
stones and decorated with
a fringe of pearls.*





Ornaments For The Neck



GUNUS:
Ornaments For The Wrist
Simple ornament of solid
metal with ends in the
shape of a fish or a snake's head.



TIKKA



A Kashmiri Damsel Adorned with Typical Jewellery

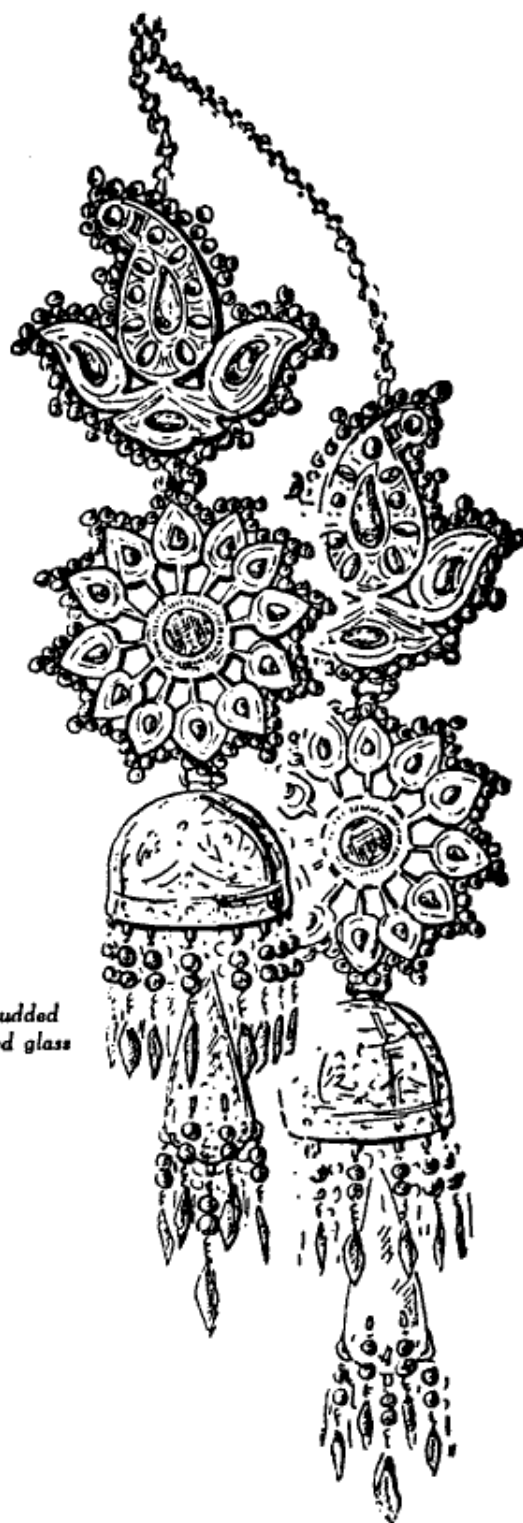




ALKA-HOR
Ornaments For The Ears

*Hanging over the ear on
either side of the head,
connected by a chain
running over the head.*

*Studded profusely with
colourful stones and beads,
with the metal serving as
a relief for the stones.*



*Gold or Silver studded
with red or coloured glass
and tones.*



TIKKA:
Ornaments worn on the forehead

*This may be of gold or silver
studded with red and green stones
fringed with hanging pearls and
metal leaves.*

Chapter XIV

CONCLUSION

The inspiration to the artisan of Kashmir has primarily come from the rich natural environment of the valley. In the great irregular oval consisting of a similarly shaped level vale in the centre, the rushing rivulets and streams criss cross every dale and vale presenting a pattern so pleasing to the eye. In their course running over boulders making water falls and reipplying over pebbly beds, they rush amidst the green paddy fields and growing grooves of willows along their banks to form the Vitasta. Meandering its path through the plains of the valley, the Vitasta in a zig-zag course, flows majestically making beautiful curves with its banks. From the Gopadri (Shankrachaya hill), the curves of the river make an impressive scenario touching every sensitive mind.

The seasons change like the moods of Cleopetra. The spring excites with the flowering peach, almond blossoms, the narcissus, defodils, daisies, the Iris and above all the blood red tulip, the summer enters with pleasant morning breeze showering cascades of scented flowers and fruits and lotuses tossing their heads over the shimmering waters of the Dal, the autumn is symbolized by the majestic Chinar with burnished leaves and variety of hues in perfect relief and winter thrills one with dancing flakes of snow and the trees, plants and houses presenting beautiful figures showing the broad contours under a thick cover of snow.

In this natural oval live the great people, who could not but be influenced by the overwhelming environment; inspiring them to shape a culture rich in thought, aesthetics and arts. Abhinav Gupta, the great son of the soil did not only contribute to the indigenous philosophy of Shaivism but also to the rich treasure of aesthetics. According to him 'to knead nature into a work of art is nearest approximation to the knowledge of god-head'. The beautiful objects of nature motivated the ancient people of Kashmir to entropomorphise them giving artistic expression to their views about the world and its being. They thought that nature was the manifestation of an all pervading force that is Siva and worshipped it in different forms. Following the course of pantheism Kashmir sculptors created aesthetically rich and beautiful forms of gods and goddesses in stone and metals, representing various manifestations of that Supreme Being and built lofty temples to worship them. The artisans of Kashmir, inspired by the richness of the natural environment, its flora and fauna and also from the curves and the ripples of the rivers and lakes, produced such pieces of excellent art as were adored and praised by the art lovers throughout the world.

One of the names which the people of Kashmir were given was Sastra-Shilpa meaning the architects of stone. They had earned fame in the skill of building art. Mirza Haider Dughlat calls the

ancient temples built by the sculptors of Kashmir as the wonder of Kashmir. Possessed with the natural instinct for artistic creations, the artisan of Kashmir produced elegant hand made pottery of various forms with geometrical designs as found in Burzahom excavations and terra-cotta tiles with complicated motifs drawn over them. Burzahom culture is an ancient one, as old as 4,325 years according to Carbon-14 dating tests. The only difference with other ancient civilisations is the stage of development. While the Harappan and Mesopotamian cultures were far advanced, the culture of Burzahom is only Neolithic at an advanced stage. It appears to enter Bronze Age. Along with many sophisticated stone implements a copper arrow also was found. Stone blade industry was absent. Perhaps this culture was at a stage where they were attempting at an alternative medium for tools, the metals. Course grey and brownish pottery was found. Pottery was also found in advanced Mesopotamian and Indus Valley civilisations.

It is not carbon dating tests alone which have proved the antiquity of Burzahom culture but also the comparison of skeletal remains with other Neolithic sites--Takkala Kota, Nagarjuna Konda and Piklihal. Ten human burials were found almost complete. The comparisons of crania showed that Burzahom crania is, on the whole, more close to Harapan Cemetery series than other Neolithic series of India. M/s Arbinda Basu and Anandi Pal, after a detail data analysis reached the following conclusion :

"From the comparison of the metric traits as recorded, it seems to be plausible conclusion to say that the Burzahom people are more similar to Harapan people of Southern India. The resemblance ----- most probably reflects their genetic affinity and probably also hints towards an ethnic continuity"

At the lower level of the excavations at Burzahom a type of highly polished black-ware and potshreds with incised geometrical designs were found and it alludes to the fact that even during ancient-most times Kashmir artisan was well adept in producing fine pottery.

The Buddhist ruins dating 4th century A.D. at Harwan, Srinagar, show an advanced stage of development. The craftsman appears at his best. Moulded brick and terracotta tiles have been found. Presentation of complicated motifs on these tiles speak of the skill and the aesthetic level of the artisans of those times. The motifs depicted on the tiles are, hunting horsemen, joyous men and women on a balcony, women wearing transparent robes with delicate and sheen scarves and large ear-rings, a lady carrying a flower vase, a female beating a drum and armed horseman with flying scarf attached to his uniform. The motifs on tiles show the existence of superior cloth as revealed by transparent robes and delicate sheen scarfs. It shows that the craft of spinning and weaving was at its best. A flower vase could be of copper, bronze or earthen.

Nilmata Purana placed between 6th and 7th century AD refers to so many items produced by craftsmen. Even their tools are mentioned. Articles of dress allude to the arts of spinning, weaving, dyeing and washing. Mention of armaments, vessels made of gold and silver point, to the existence of silver and gold smiths. There is mention of carpentry and leather work. The term used for dress are *vastra*, *ambara* and *vasna*. Arts and crafts were so important those days that Nilamat Purana provides for a ritual for worshipping 'Viswakarama', the originator of all crafts. Even the tools were worshipped. Artisans were directed to undergo fast on a particular day and thereafter take to worshipping of 'Bhadrakali'. That the Viswakarama Diwas (day) continues to be celebrated by all skilled and unskilled artisans, craftsmen, factory workers, engineers etc. irrespective of caste and creed throughout India, only underlines the need to restore these finer aspects of Kashmiri culture and traditions, which have for some reasons, been neglected for quite some time now.

Ample evidence is available in Rajtarangini which shows that many articles of common use were produced by artisans those days. Broadly these can be categorised as pottery, textiles, items produced from gold, silver, copper and brass. Stone work, glassware and leather goods also were produced. Gold and silverware was in great demand in foreign markets, especially in Central Asia and beyond. Later period of Rajtarangini shows that articles like golden and silver figurines, golden couch, parasol of gold, golden sticks and golden armour were produced.

Textile products of Kashmir had established name in ancient times. This is confirmed by Rajtarangini. It mentions Pattan being famous for weaving cloths. Kanihama near Patan still derives its fame for its production of fine shawls. There is mention of 'thread spun by worms' in Sabhaparva of Mahabharata and its stuff having been presented by a feudatory prince from North West of India to Yudhishtara. The gifts supplied to Northern India by 'Haimasvatas' of Sabhaparvas' of Mahabharata which most probably included Kashmiris, also included, among other things, smooth cotton textile pieces and woollen blankets. Such a view is strengthened by tradition prevalent in Kashmir, that Kurus presented 10,000 shawls to Pandvas and that Kashmir shawl formed the part of the dowry of Sita. This is an ample testimony to the antiquity of Kashmir shawl, silk and other textiles.

The craftsman connected with copper and brass wares were highly skilled. A study of these metal images reveals a continuity of stylistic trends and innovative iconography through the Karkuta, Utpala and Lohara periods of this age. Wood being bountifully available in Kashmir, craftsmen produced articles of daily use besides the items of decoration from it. They produced wooden houses, bathing huts, boats and bridges. Kashmiri artisan has been superb in working on stone. King Samadhimat got a thousand lingas prepared by carving a rock all round which were visible even upto 12th century AD. Jayandra, got a colossal statue of Buddha cut and chiselled and erected by the artisans in that period. The architect, Jaya created the beautiful form Vishnu. Small figurines of gods and goddesses, were made by artisans. A big Sun temple was built by king Lalitaditya at Martanda. The ruins of this wonder creation are still extant in Kashmir and speak for itself about the great skill of the artisans of those times.

The economic conditions of the artisans of the ancient times in Kashmir fluctuated with the change in the external and internal trading environment. Much earlier, under Asoka and Kushan rule, trade had extended upto Central Asia through Kashmir. Taking advantage of the geographical situation and the political dispensation which obtained then, Kashmir exported its products to the trading centres in the north and the Indian subcontinent in the south. It encouraged external trade of Kashmir. Opening of vast market required supply of goods in huge quantities. It augmented the production activity of the traders who in turn paid good price to the artisans. With the rise of Huns and much later with Muslim invasion of North India, the tables were turned. This trade equilibrium could not last long. Kashmir had reached a state of flourishing trade during the time of Asoka and Kanishka. As a result it received inspiration in the field of art and culture from the Indian subcontinent, Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians. Its own kings like Lalitaditya (624-661 AD.) and Jayapida (776-817AD.) by their extensive conquests enriched it with huge wealth and new ideas. Fresh experience and new ideas amidst wealth and prosperity found expression in constructive and creative activity.

At the beginning of what is called the medieval period of Kashmir's history, the tiny valley was struck with a sudden calamity. Kashmir fell victim to the Tartar invasion led by a vandal Zulju (Dalchu) by name. Many peasant cultivators were killed. A large number of artists and craftsmen had perished in the course of Zulju's invasion. More than four hundred years of chaos and conflict caused as a result of power struggles among the kings of Kashmir; the troubles created by landed nobility challenging even the authority of kings and invasions from outside had left the people of Kashmir

emasculated. Kashmir presented a scenario in which every effort had to be made just for existence. People had become insensitive to any kind of creative activity. Art and culture received a great setback.

After a long period of wilderness and despondency, king Zain-ul-Abidin emerged like an oasis in a vast desert. Among other good things which he did was to encourage cottage industries and arts and crafts of Kashmir. He did not only restore the forgotten arts and crafts of Kashmir but also introduced new ones. He improved the qualitative aspects of an art. Any master artisan or craftsman who visited Kashmir those days, was induced to teach his craft to the locals. He patronised artisans from Persia, Samarkand and Bukhara. He even provided financial assistance to those people who desired to go to foreign countries to learn new art. He arranged the production of hand made paper in well organised fashion. He invited experts from Samarkand to teach their artisan folk how to make pottery of light weight-papier mache. He requisitioned carpet weavers from Samarkand and ordered their manufacture in the valley. To Zain-ul-Abidin goes the credit of reviving the traditional Shawl industry in a big way. Sultan Zain-u-Abidin reorganised the ancient Silk Industry. He introduced weavers brush and loom which helped in the production of silk cloth. Passing away of this great king on 12th May, 1470 AD was followed by a long period of internecine power struggle among his sons and grand sons and other aspirants. Due to the protracted civil strifes arts and crafts once again received a set back.

History had left it to a foreign invader, Mirza Haider Dughlat to revitalize these arts and crafts and save these from total annihilation. Haider Dughlat was himself a versatile genius and appreciated the work done by the great Sultan-Zain-ul-Abidin. He too invited craftsmen from different countries. He also introduced some new crafts. One such craft was *Khutambandi* ceiling. Mirza Haider reinvigorated the shawl industry by introducing the coloured thread. ".....The cottage industries and other arts and crafts which had been languishing due to civil wars, were again brought to life," says *Baburnama*.

The Mughals had brought with them grandeur and new culture to Kashmir. "The word Mughal connotes the ultimate in luxury and display and this hyperbolic assumption is probably not wide off the mark. They enriched Kashmir with fine aesthetics which was the ancient tradition of Kashmir. They flourished art and architecture. The gifted artisans of Kashmir got tremendous boost. Akbar invited the master craftsmen to his court for producing shawls. He employed them in Imperial workshops. He took personal interest in getting the quality and texture of the fabric improved. He gave the Shawl the name of *PARM NARAM*. Akbar introduced the practice of using two shawls, one over the other. This became a fashion among the Mughal nobility. Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah ordered shawls worth forty thousand rupees. The design is still named after him--Mohammad Shahi.

After the death of Zain-ul-Abidin carpet weaving had become almost dead. Mughals gave the craft a fresh life. The very fact that there are old carpets dating 1653 AD in Ashar Mahal at Bijapur originating from Kashmir, is evidence enough to show that carpet industry had been encouraged by the Mughals. Even papier mache crafts had thrived during Mughal times. The products of papier-mâché like pen-cases, jewellery boxes, book ends etc. were in great demand in Delhi and other capitals. The traditional arts and crafts of Kashmir followed their own momentum. Even under most unfavourable conditions, like the Afghan rule in Kashmir, they continued to persist. They continued to give expression to their strong urge of producing a piece of art. We, therefore, find during the time of one Afghan Governor Azad Khan, a master crafts man, Ala baba, getting inspired by the marks of the dirty feet of a fowl on a piece of white cloth devising a coloured design of embroidery for a shawl. These shawls in fascinating colours put Europe on fire. Josephine, to whom Napoleon had gifted a Kashmiri shawl, owned two hundred shawls.

Nineteenth century brought both rise and collapse in arts and crafts industry of Kashmir. Shawl industry had reached the heights so much so that it gave more revenue to the Govt. than the land

revenue. But Franco-German war of 1870 which ended in the defeat of France brought a death knell to the industry.

Odyssey of the Kashmiri shawl is a long tale of many smiles and tears. Born, as it was, centuries ago, it made its beginning from the regions in Western Tibet, deep inside Himalayas and the Tien-Shan mountains in Central Asia where from its raw material was collected. Trudging its way over mountain peaks and zig-zag paths the Pashm wool reached the valley of Kashmir. There it was cleaned and spun by the dextrous hands of the beautiful women of Kashmir and going through about nineteen processes of various specialists including designers found itself on the loom of the weavers. After adding their blood and sweat for months, it was presented to the world community as a magic gift of Kashmir's cultural heritage.

The shawl industry was substantial source of revenue to Government, but unfortunately the Government went beyond limits in taxing the industry. The rates of duties and taxes differed under different rulers. They charged both the import duty on the raw wool and the export duty on the finished product. Sometimes the poll tax was charged from the weavers and sometimes on looms. Subsequently the State collected the shawls from the loom and marked it after deducting the taxes leaving the balance for the owner of the shawl.

The economic condition of the weavers contrasted with the beautiful master pieces of art which they produced. They worked in small, unventilated and dilapidated rooms from dawn to dusk with their backs bent and eyes concentrated on the design they wove on the loom or worked with a needle. Because of the unhygienic conditions, lack of nourishment and overwork, they suffered from chest infection, rheumatism and scrofula. Their "ustad" would lend them money on marriages and other social functions, which they were never able to repay. And then they had to be his bonded labourer throughout his life.

Trade in Kashmir carpets sprung in the middle of the nineteenth century when these were brought to the notice of the English people very prominently by the then Indian Government. Thus Kashmir carpets formed one of the conspicuous items in Chicago World Fair in 1890. The standard of these carpets started falling very fast due to the fact that the English importers wanted to obtain these on cheap rates and in least possible time. Though the standard was falling, yet the trade was monopolised by Europeans and huge investments were made by them. In 1875 AD. shawl method of symbols was introduced in carpet weaving. This novel experiment was successful from this day onwards, which was adopted by the artisans of Kashmir.

Metal art work of Kashmir excelled in the workmanship and created a name all over the world. The list of articles confiscated from the *Toshkhana* of prince Sher Singh at Srinagar by Jamadar Khushal Singh contained, among other things, elegant utensils made of gold and silver. Their excellence is confirmed by the fact that some of the best pieces of such an art still exist in the Albert and Victoria Museum, London. The weapon industry had shown the signs of decline in the early part of the 19th century and as such the signs of decline in the early part of the 19th century and as such the readjustment of the workers from this industry to the metal works had taken place. In case of copper work, a new development at the end of the 19th century was that the artisans began imitating the Tibetan teapots and bowls and Yarkand and Kashgar vessels. But the traditional type of Kashmir art continued throughout 19th century.

On the whole as the years passed towards 20th century, the quality of arts and crafts went on deteriorating. It has many reasons. In Kashmir, especially at Srinagar, tradition had bound workmen of specialised crafts into various artisan communities, precisely because, their respective crafts, gave them a lot of revenue. There was Government supervision over these arts and crafts. A government officer

ensured the good quality of raw material and also the quality of the articles produced. Due to the acute crisis in the shawl industry and the famine of 1878-79, there was lot of readjustment of these artisan communities cutting across their hereditary status in a particular craft they enjoyed. The government also had to come forth with the tax reliefs and in fact, in certain cases abolishing the tax all together. Consequently there was relaxation in supervision of bad art work. The shawl weavers used the spurious wool brought from Amritsar and silver smiths used alloy.

From the second quarter of the 20th century, there started an organised political movement in Kashmir. It represented mostly the people of the Srinagar city who were mostly artisans. Though the movement was started by the educated youngmen of the city but it was backed by poor sections of the people who were Shal-bafs, Kal-bafs and papier mache workers. They expected deliverance from the clutches of their Karkhandars and relief from the government to help them in the poor economic dispensation in which they were placed. For this they had to give supreme sacrifice in 1931 when many of them were killed in the Srinagar jail episode. They had raised a standard of revolt even in 1865, when Dagshwal had fleeced them with heavy taxation. The political movement in thirties was led by towering leader of Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. It was the New Kashmir programme of the National Conference which contained the Workers Charter laying down the rights of the artisans and craftsmen of Kashmir. After a relentless struggle fought by National Conference, its Government came into power in 1947. The process was hastened due to the partition of the country and the invasion of Pakistan on Kashmir.

Sweeping land reforms of major dimension were ordered by Sheikh Abdullah's Govt. immediately after he assumed charge of Jammu and Kashmir. It led to major structural changes in land relations. Worst form of Jagirdari system and big landlordism which prevailed in Kashmir was abolished without paying any compensation. Suddenly the tiller was the master of the land. There was no landlord tenant relationship. Feudalism was liquidated. But interestingly, such a revolutionary structural change was not brought in artisan industries. In all such industries, even today, there exists most hateful system based on feudal relationship. At the top there is *Khowja* (the investor), at the middle, the *Vostakar* (the master crafts man) and at the bottom, the artisans. The *Khowja* is arrogant and exploitative towards the artisans.

When the new Government took over, their priority was to free the artisans from the tragic state of affairs which obtained then. In the financial year 1948-49, a special plan of industrial co-operatives was visualised on the lines of great experiment in China. It was introduced on experimental basis. Though the number of Industrial Co-operatives increased day after day, yet it could not altogether replace the traditional system though it weakened the hold of the *Khowja*.

The Government was at pains to give immediate relief to the artisans. Arts and crafts were almost stagnating for want of wide market. Partition of the country and the invasion of Kashmir by Pakistan had cut off Indian market for Kashmir. There was no road link worth the name. The Government, therefore, decided to open a network of emporia in the capital cities of India where Kashmir arts and crafts could be sold. The number of these emporia increased year after year. In 1953 Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed took over in Kashmir. He mobilised the help of Central Cottage Industries Emporium and Bombay Small Scale and Cottage Industries Department for the guidance of Kashmir Government and for augmenting the sales. As a matter of policy the new Government directed all the arts emporia of the state in various cities of the country to participate in various Industrial Exhibitions held in different parts of the country.

The development of cottage industries in Kashmir was now taking place under the Indian Planning process. During fourth year of the First Five Year Plan, the Director of Industries made a survey of the

whole state and formulated the scheme of opening Demonstration-cum-Production Centres. Many such model centres were opened for various crafts of the state. Training centres for various arts and crafts were also opened. This programme was both intensive and extensive. For improving the art forms the Government opened an institute for research and Development. This institute was named as School of Designs and it was manned by the famous artists of Kashmir.

With single minded devotion, the Government which though deviated from its course due to certain political upheavals, yet pursued the policy of widening the market for artisan industries through a network of Government emporia, popularised their elegant arts through national and international exhibitions, encouraged artisans by employing them in production centres, motivated them for organising into co-operatives, managed guidance and assistance from All India Boards, provided training by opening training centres and made available new designs and motifs for their products. All these steps led to a tremendous progress in arts and crafts of Kashmir. The progress has been sustained even during the period of worst form of terrorism in Kashmir.

To conclude, the rich and unique cultural heritage of Kashmir what we call as *Kashmiriat* is a blend of numerous strands of art, culture and history woven together. Various elements such as the unique and distinct tradition of historiography, being the fountainhead of rich philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism and Rishi thought, the birth-place of the legendary Kashmir shawl, elegant designs of nature, flora and fauna in various forms of wood carving, paper mache, metal work or embroidery and so on form the very essence of *Kashmiriat*. Kashmir arts and crafts have not only created their own identity in the world of arts and crafts but have in turn imparted their uniqueness to Kashmir's cultural and artistic heritage. The genius of Kashmiri artisan is reflected in the arts and crafts, he creates. Several places in Kashmir have achieved fame for production of specific arts and crafts. Interestingly, Kashmiri Pandits still retain the tradition of reverring the spinning wheel (*Indar*), which was used for spinning the yarn for Kashmir shawl.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

TREATY OF AMRITSAR
NO. 1

Treaty between the British Government on the one part and Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu on the other, concluded on the part of the British Government by Frederick Cureie, Esquire, Revert Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the order of the Right Honorable Company to direct and control all their affairs in the East Indies, and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person.

ARTICLE I

The British Government transfers and makes over for ever, in independent possession, to Maharaja Gulab Singh and heirs male of his body, all the hilly or mountainous country, with its dependencies, situated to the eastward of the River Indus and Westward of River Ravee, including Chumba, and excluding Lahul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State, according to the provisions of article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March 1846.

ARTICLE II

The eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing Article to Maharaja Gulab Singh, shall be laid down by commissioners appointed by the British Government and Maharaja Gulab Singh respectively for that purpose and shall be defined in a separate engagement after survey.

ARTICLE III

In consideration of the transfer made to him and heirs by the provisions of the foregoing articles, Maharaja Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of Seventy Five Lakh Rupees (Nanukshahee), fifty lakhs to be paid on ratification of this Treaty, and twenty five lakhs on or before the 1st of October of the current year A.D. 1846.

ARTICLE IV

The limits of the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh shall not be at any time changed without the concurrence of the British Government.

ARTICLE V

Maharaja Gulab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes or questions that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore, or any other neighbouring State, and will abide by the decision of the British Government.

ARTICLE VI

Maharaja Gulab Singh engages for himself and heirs to join with the whole of his Military Force, the British Troops, when employed within the hills, or the territories adjoining his possessions.

ARTICLE VII

Maharaja Gulab Singh engages never to take or to retain in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European or American State, without the consent of British Government.

ARTICLE VIII

Maharaja Gulab Singh engages to respect, in regard to the territory, transferred to him, the provisions of articles, V, VI & VII of the separate engagement between the British Government and Lahore Durbar, dated 11th March 1846.

ARTICLE IX

The Government will give its aid to Maharaja Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

ARTICLE X

Maharaja Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government and will in token of supremacy, present annually to the British Government, one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Kashmiri shawls.

This treaty, consisting of ten articles, has been this day settled by Frederick Currie Esquire and Brenet Major Henery Montgomery Lawrence acting under the directions of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Harding, G.C.B., Governor General on the part of the British Government, and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person; and the said treaty has been this day ratified by the seal of the Right Honorable Sir Henery Hardings, G.C.B., Governor General.

Done at Amritsar, this sixteenth day of March, in year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty six, corresponding with the 17th day of Rubbee-ool-awul 1262 Hijri.

F. Currie
H.M. Lawrence
Hardinge

Seal
H.

By order of Right Honorable the Governor General of India.

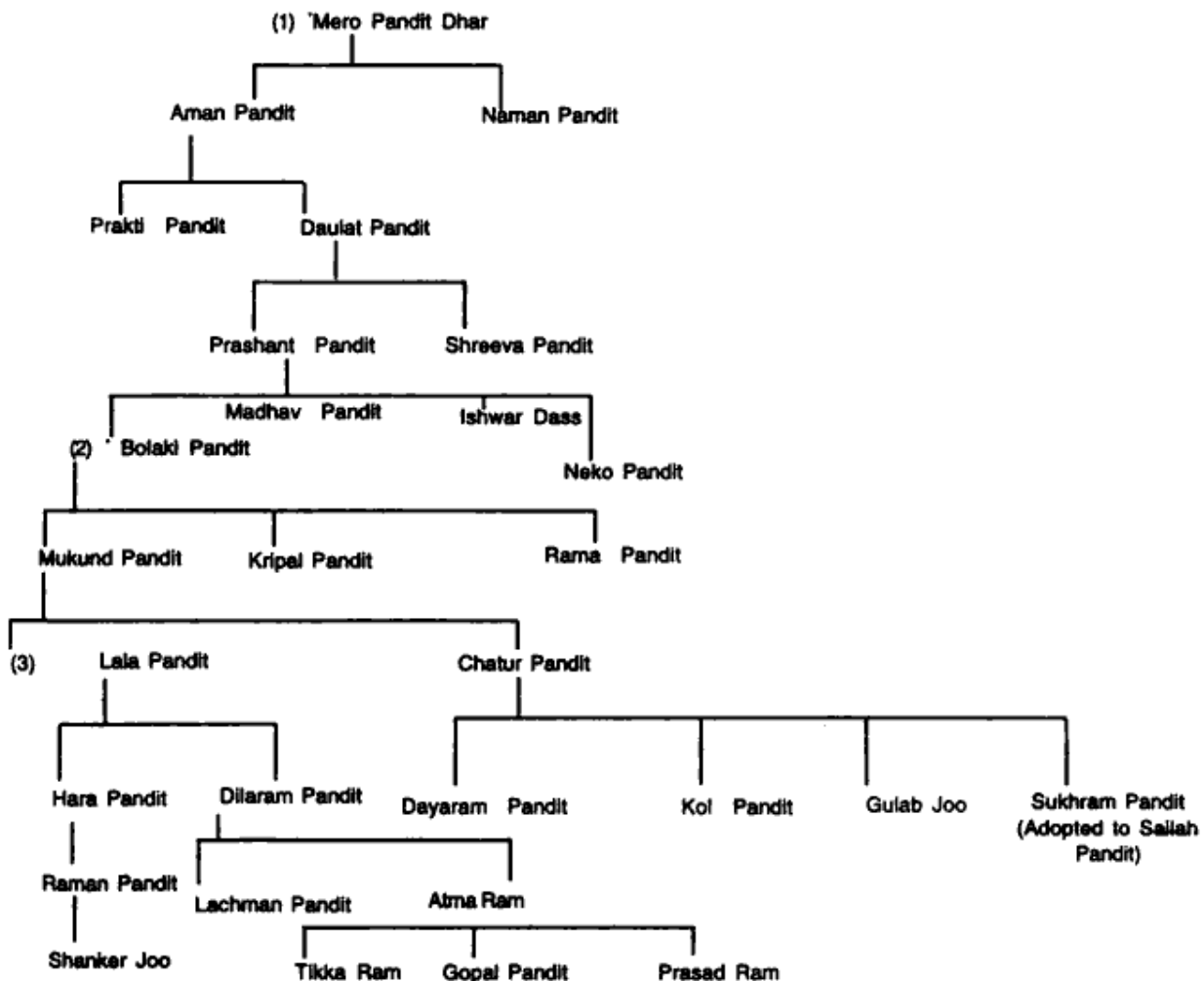
F. Currie
Secretary to Government of India
With the Governor General

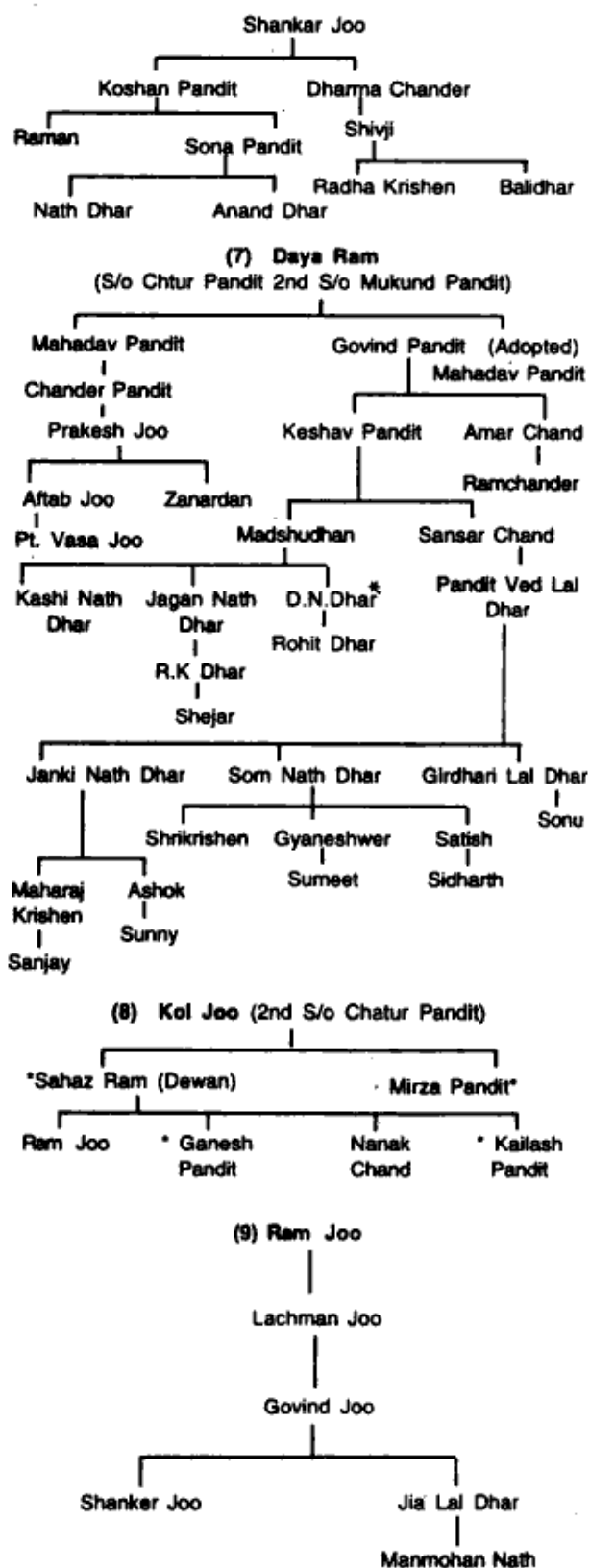
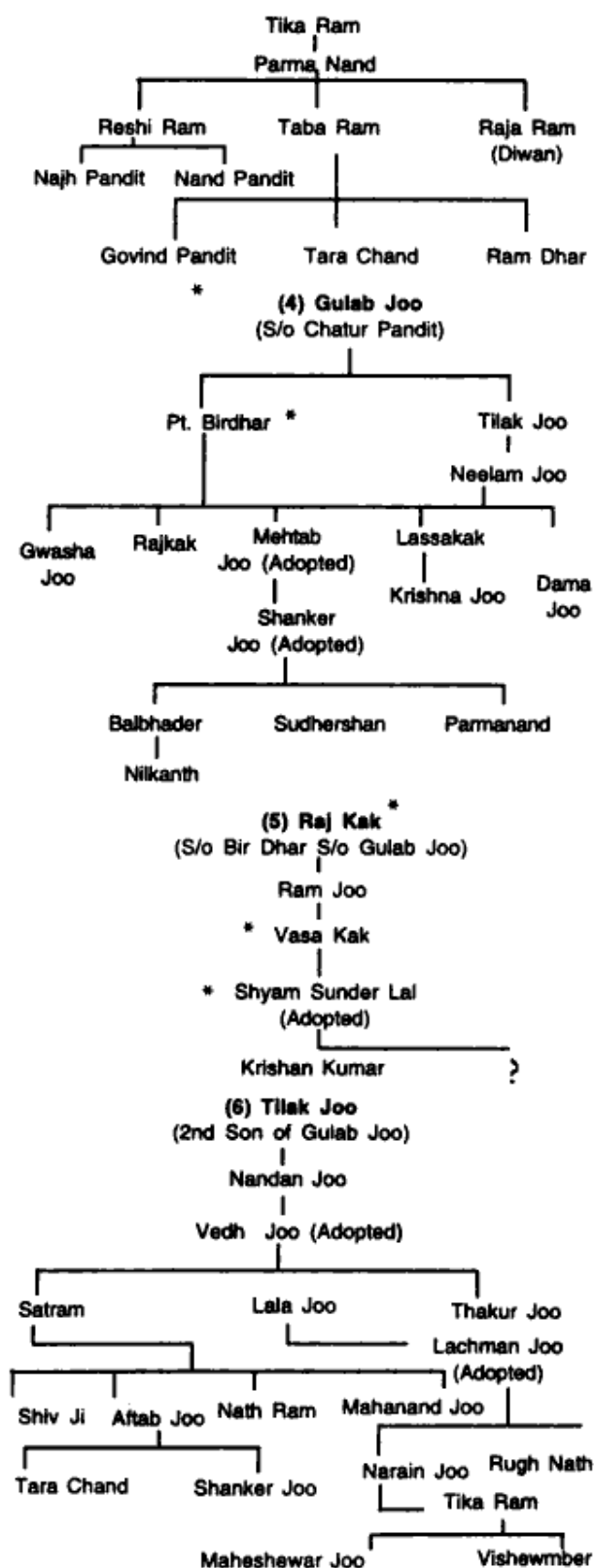
Appendix B

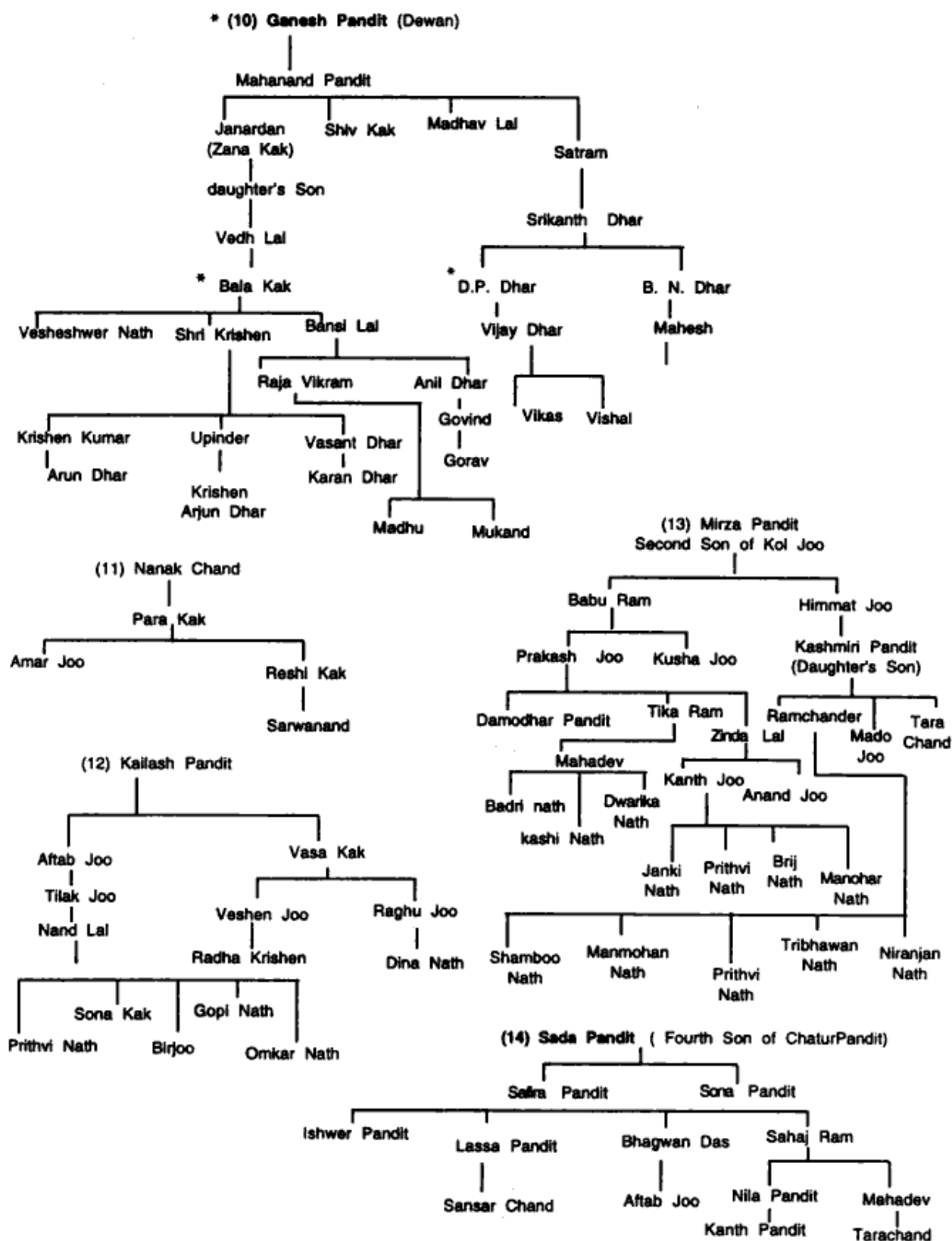
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE DHARS FROM A.D. 1612 TO A.D. 1893-94 (1950 BIKRAMI)

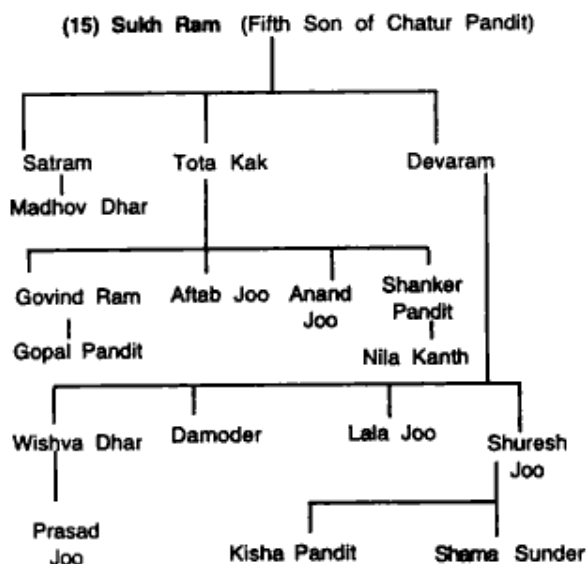
BY
PANDIT BALKAK DHAR

The tradition of updating the Dhar genealogical table was started by the son of the great grandson of Mero Pandit Dhar, Mr. Bolaki Pandit Dhar and since then the tradition has continued. This genealogical table has been compiled by late Pandit Bal Kak Dhar. At present the task of updating the table has been taken up by his Son Pandit Shrikrishan Dhar. Some new additions have already been made. It is a gigantic task to complete the whole.

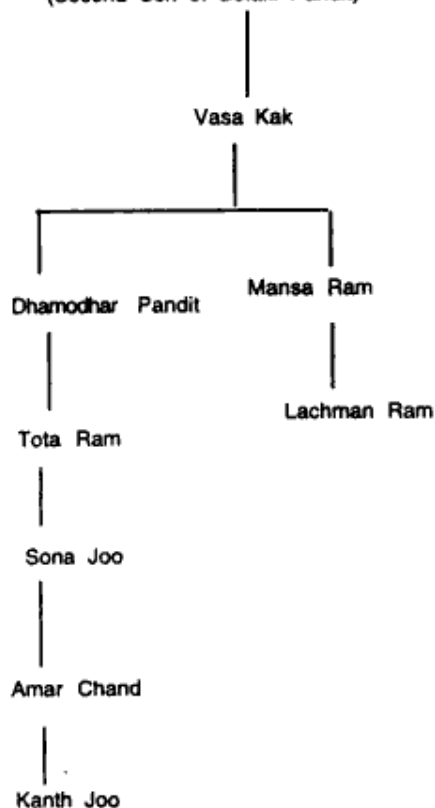




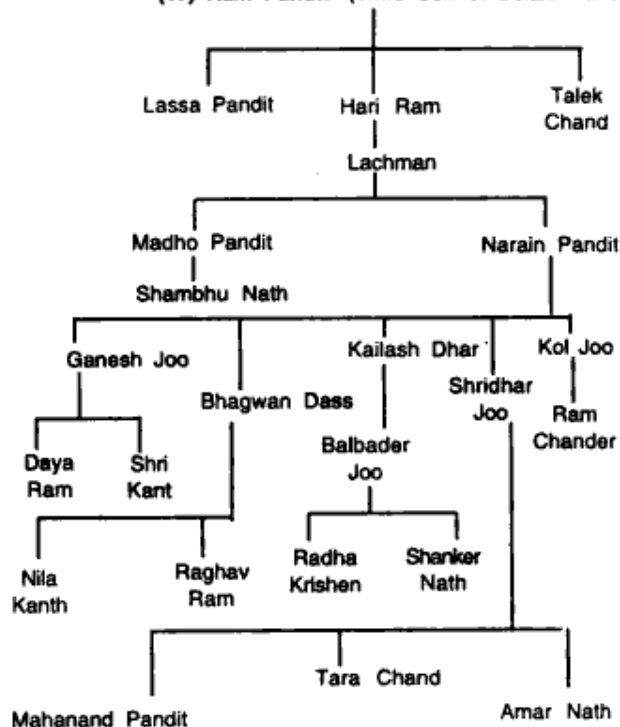




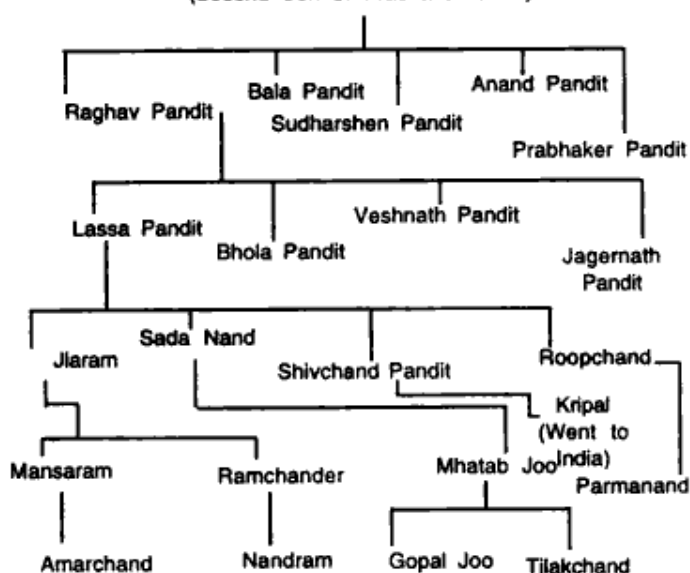
(16) Kripal Pandit
(Second Son of Bolaki Pandit)

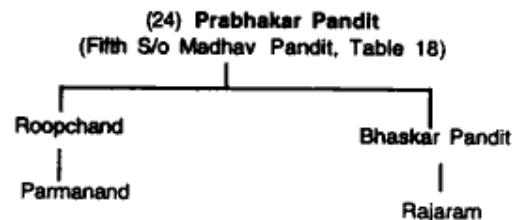
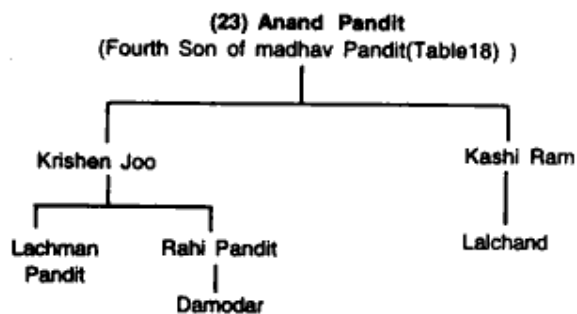
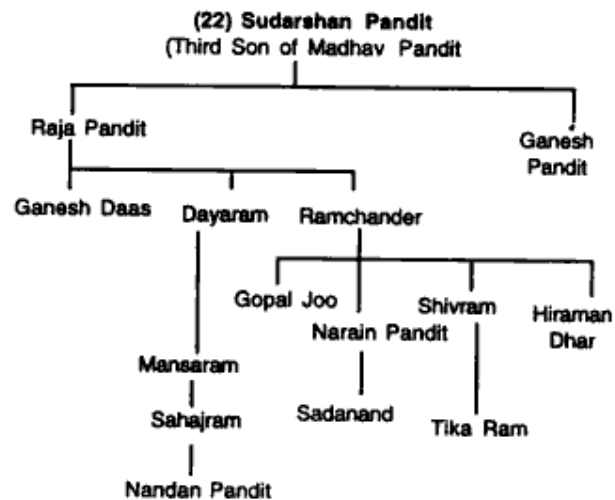
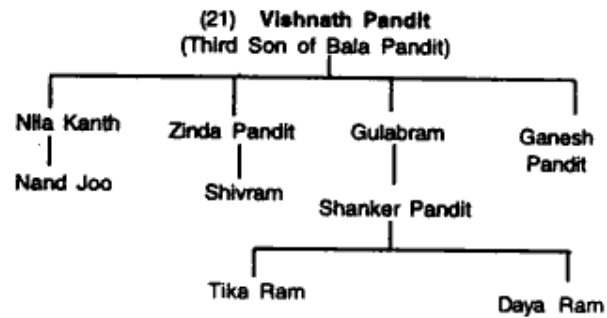
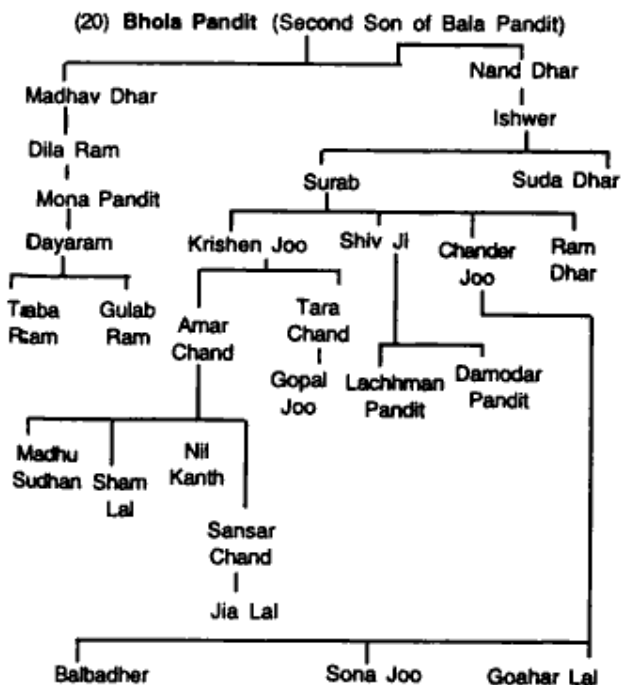
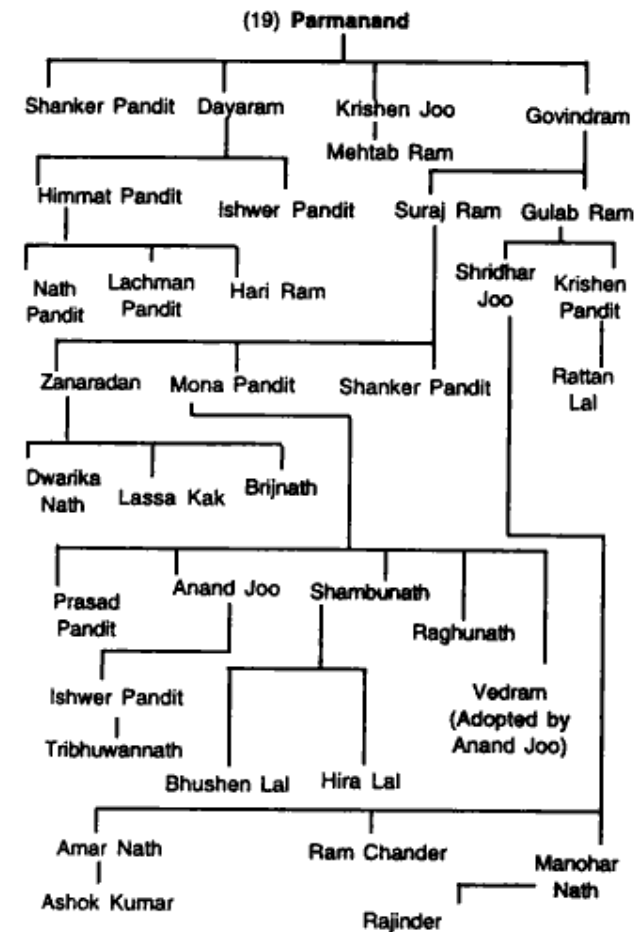


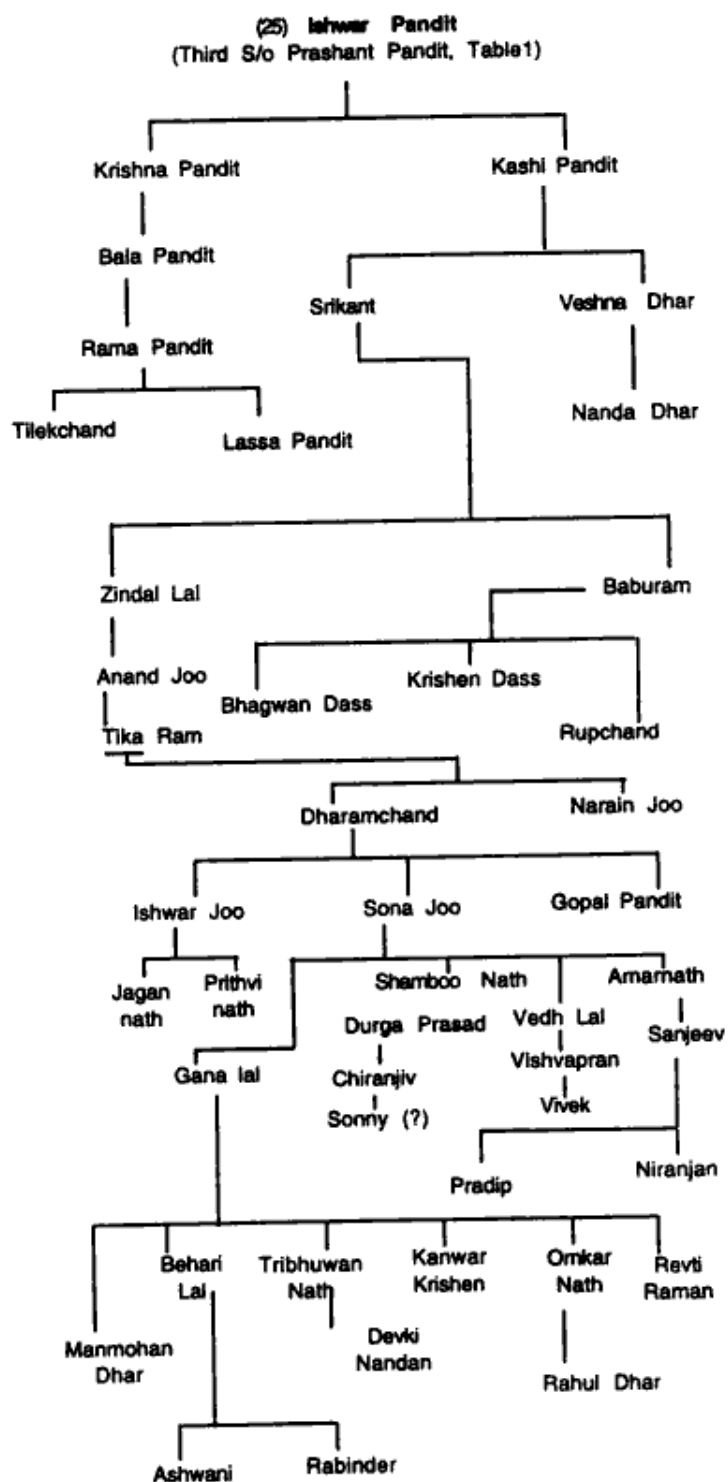
(17) Ram Pandit (Third Son of Bolaki Pandit)



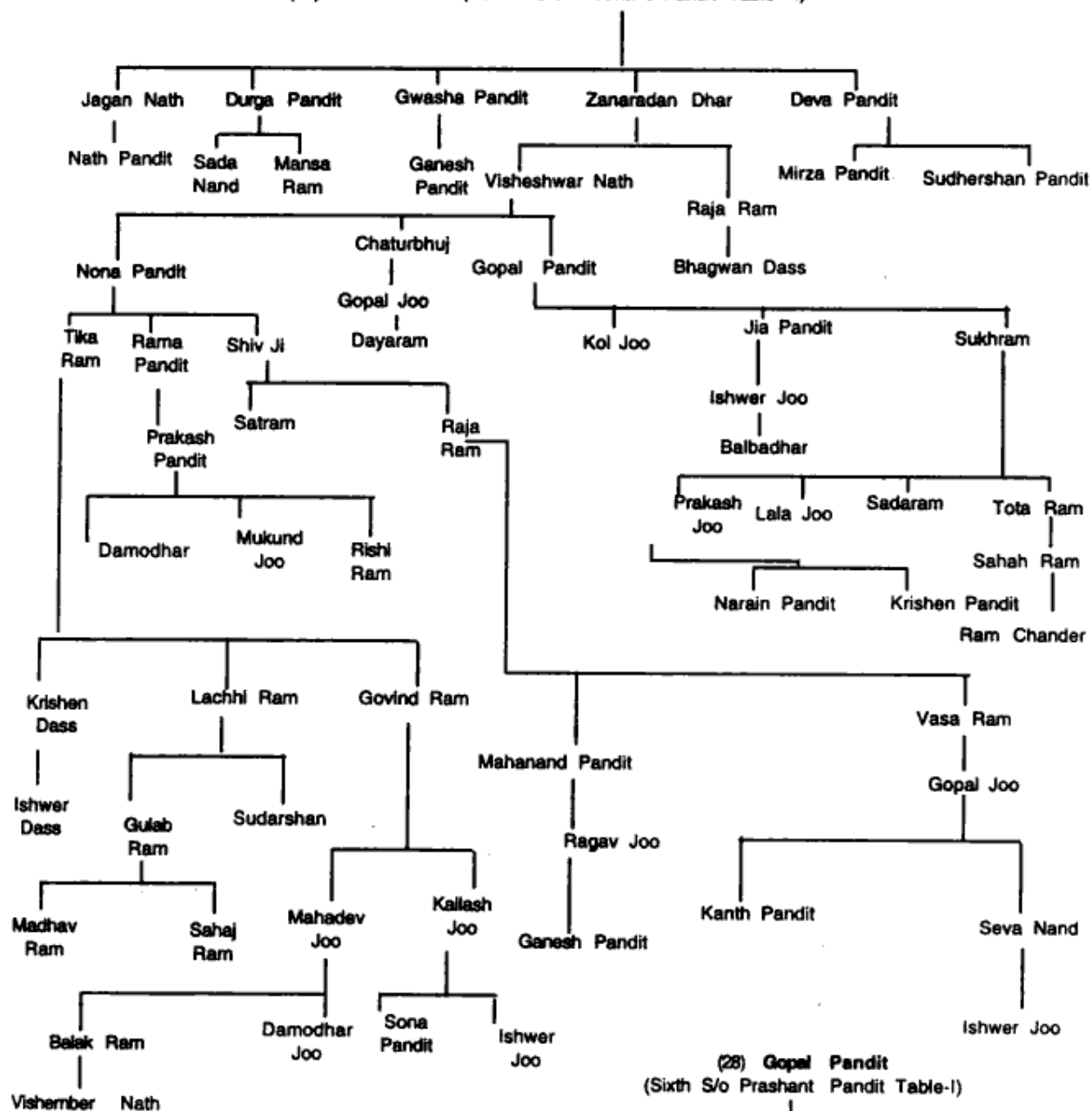
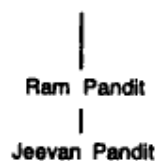
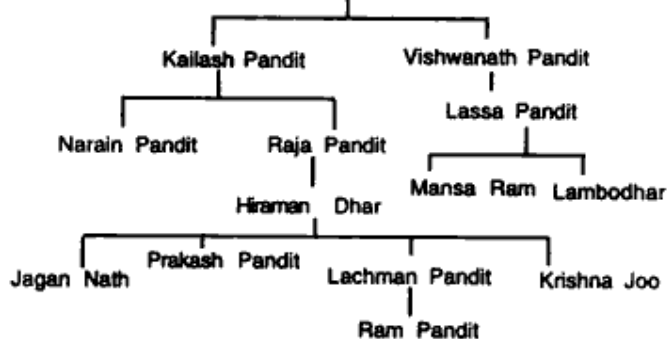
(18) Madhav Pandit
(Second Son of Prashant Pandit)



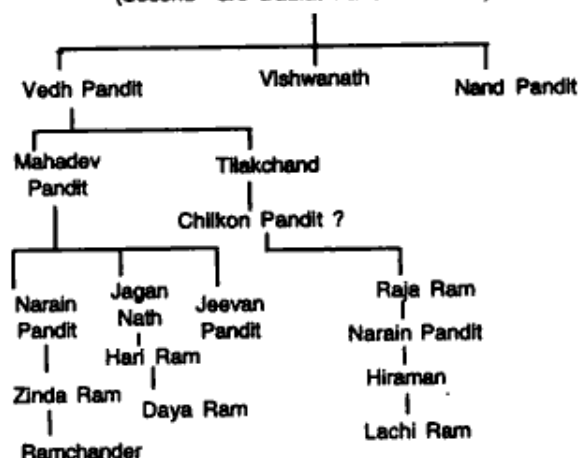




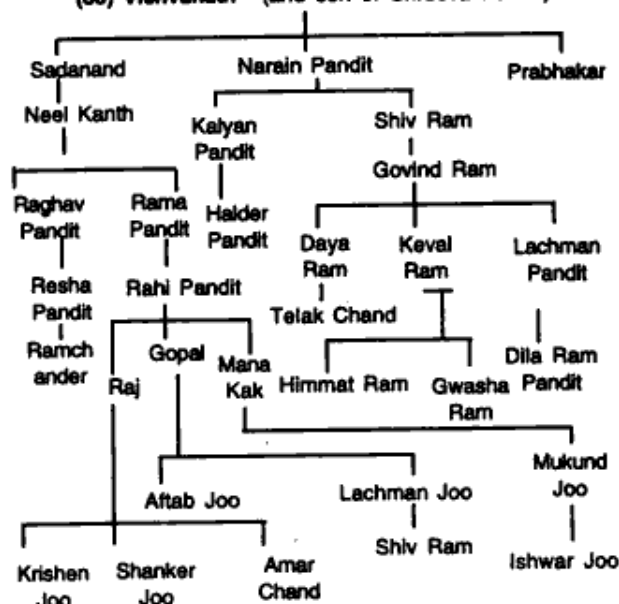
(26) Neko Pandit (Fourth S/o Prashant Pandit Table -I)

(27) Narain Pandit
(Fifth S/o Prashant Pandit Table-I)(28) Gopal Pandit
(Sixth S/o Prashant Pandit Table-I)

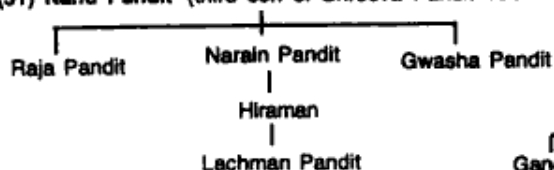
(29) Shreeva Pandit
(Second S/o Daulat Pandit Table -1)



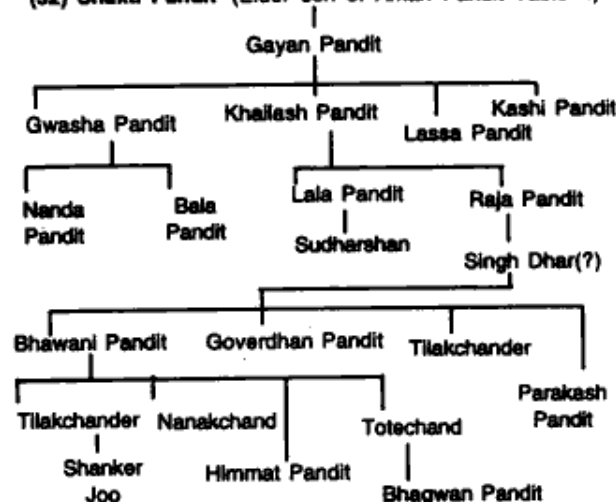
(30) Vishvanath (2nd son of Shreeva Pandit)



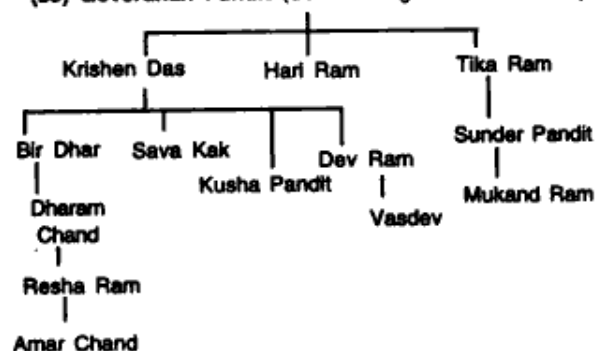
(31) Nand Pandit (third son of Shreeva Pandit Table 29)



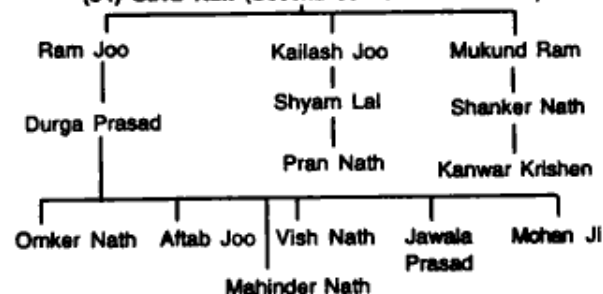
(32) Shakti Pandit (Elder son of Aman Pandit Table -1)



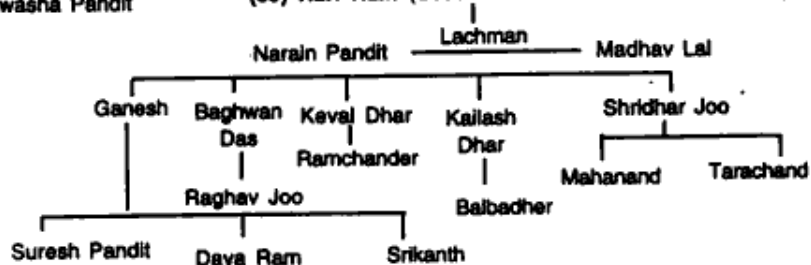
(33) Goverdhan Pandit (Son of Singh Dhar Table 32)



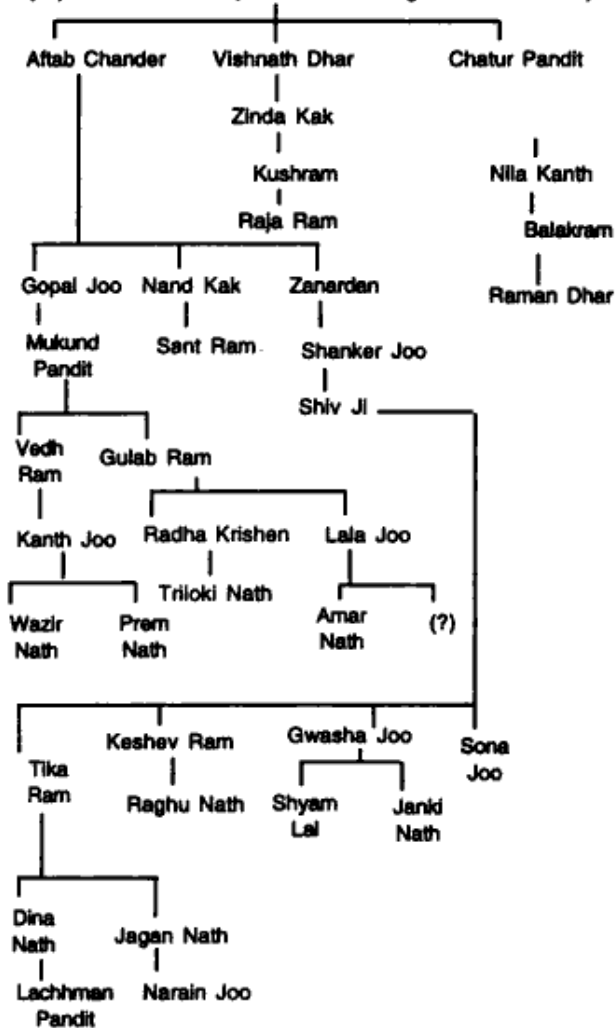
(34) Sava Kak (Second son of Krishen Das)



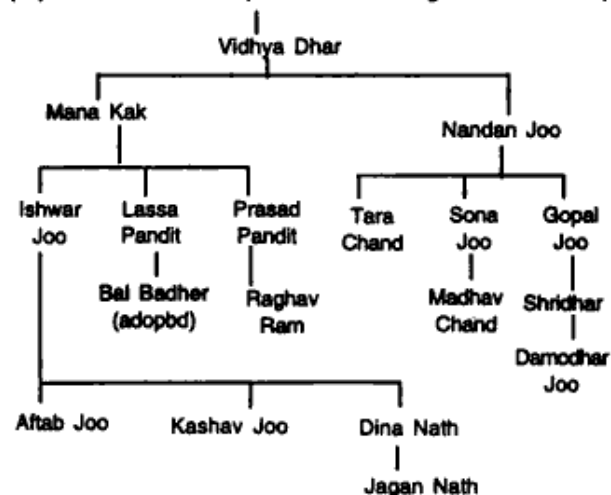
(35) Hari Ram (Second son of Goverdhan Table 33)



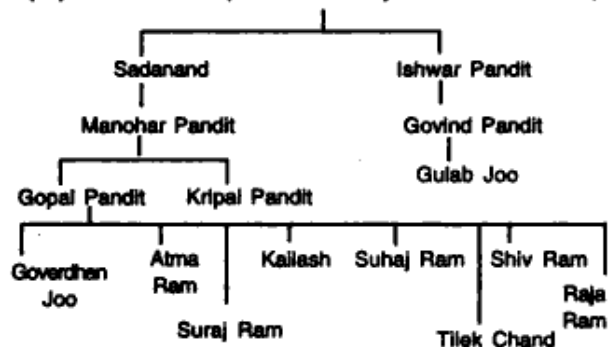
(36) Tilek Chander (Third son of Singh Dhar Table 32)



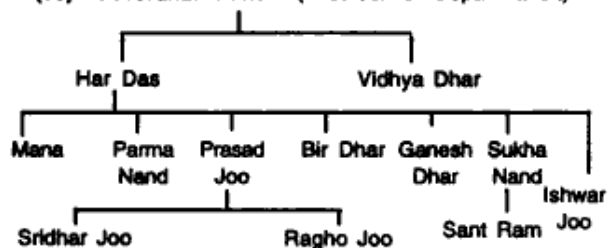
(37) Prakash Chander (Fourth Son of Singh Dhar Table 32)



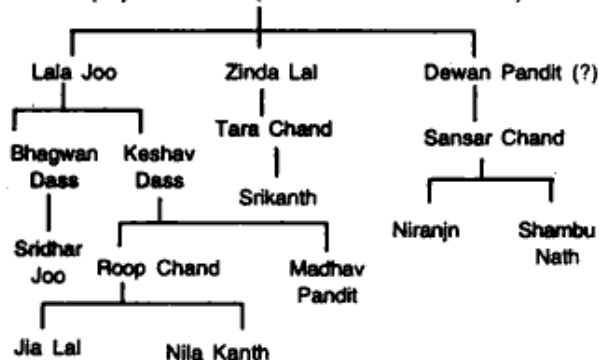
(38) Lassa Pandit (Third Son of Gyan Pandit Table 32)



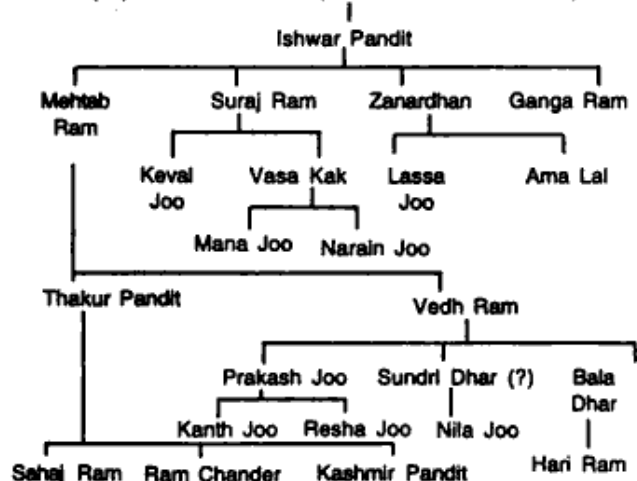
(39) Goverdhan Pandit (First son of Gopal Pandit)

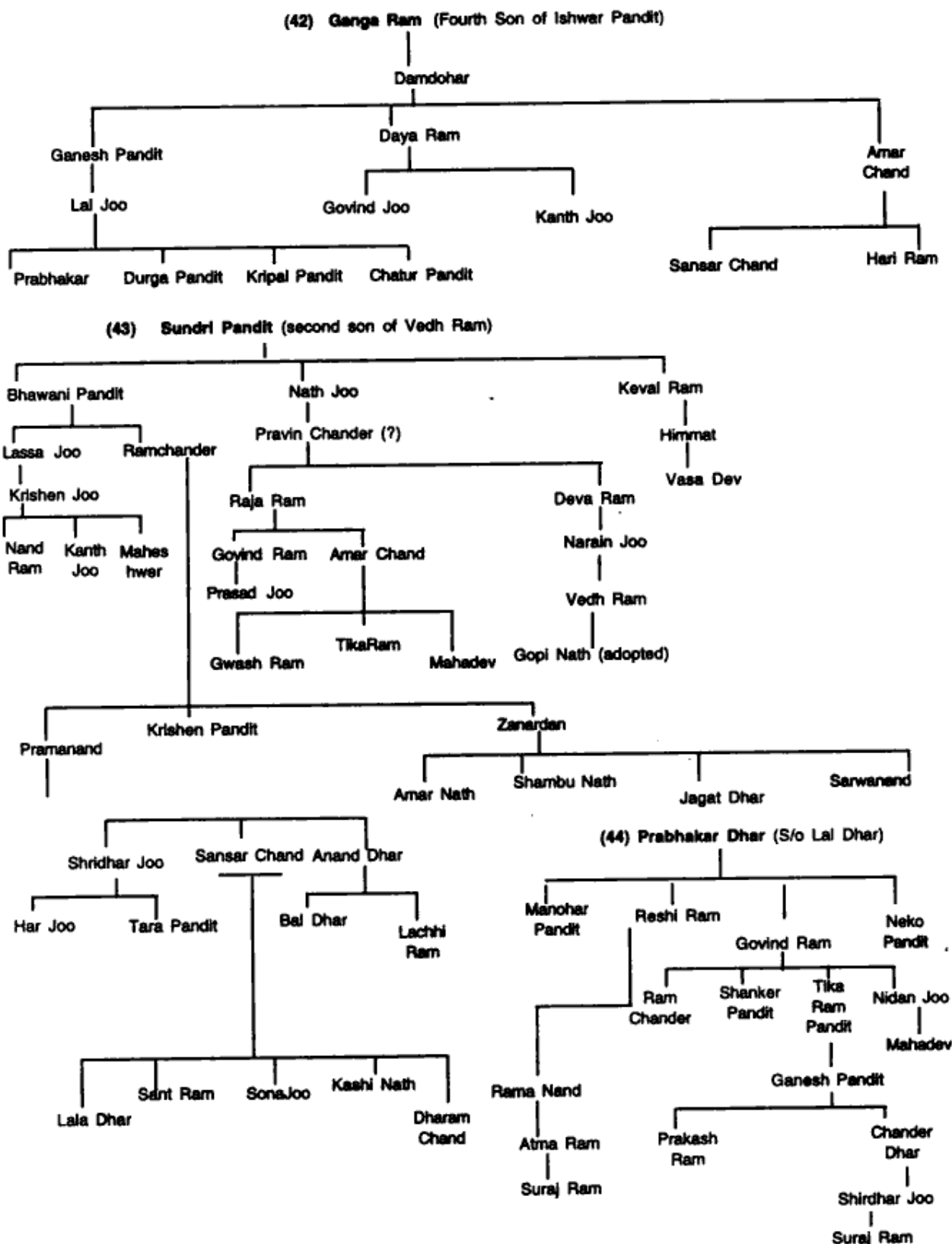


(40) Mana Joo (Elder son of Goverdhan)

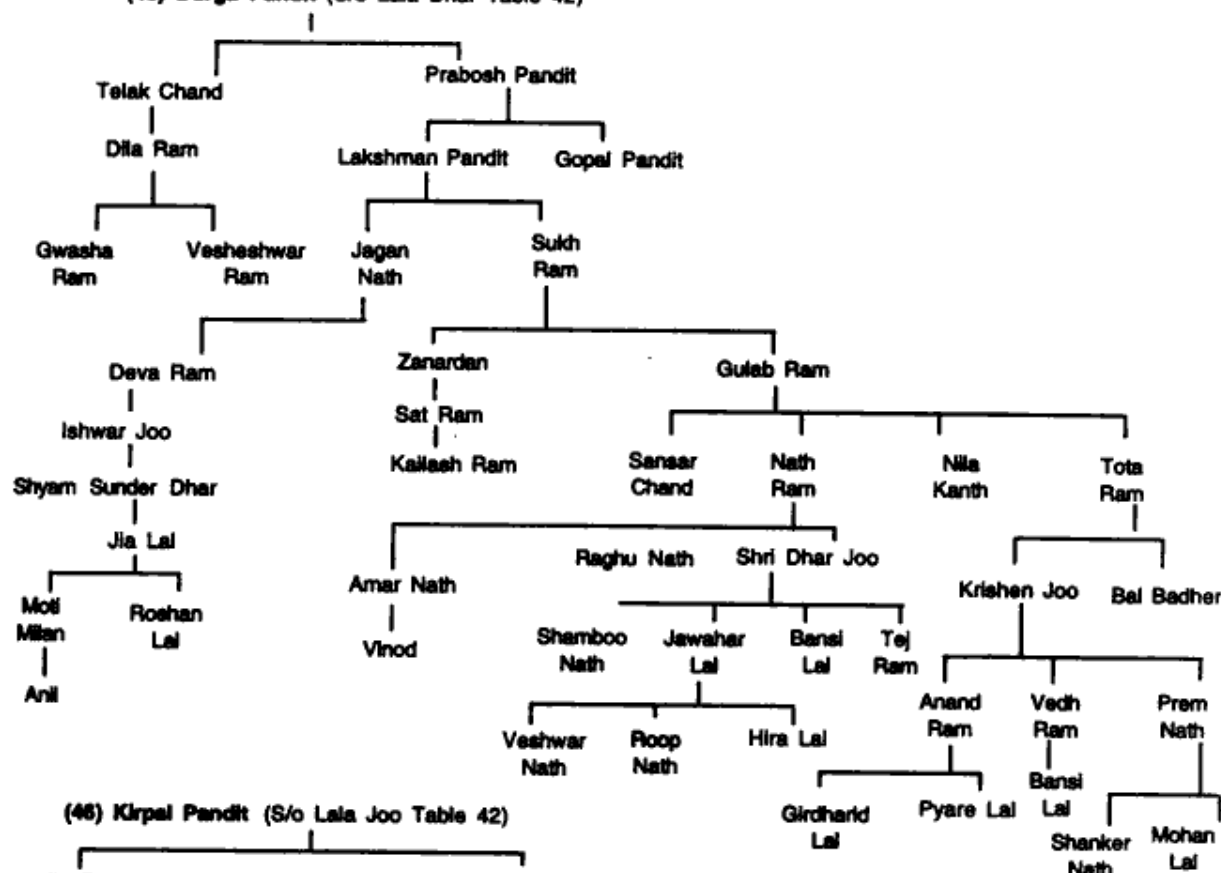


(41) Narman Pandit (S/o Miro Pandit Table 1)

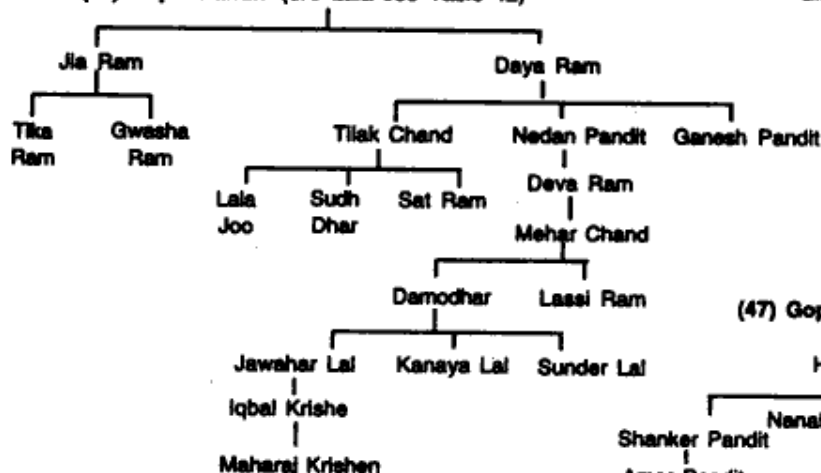




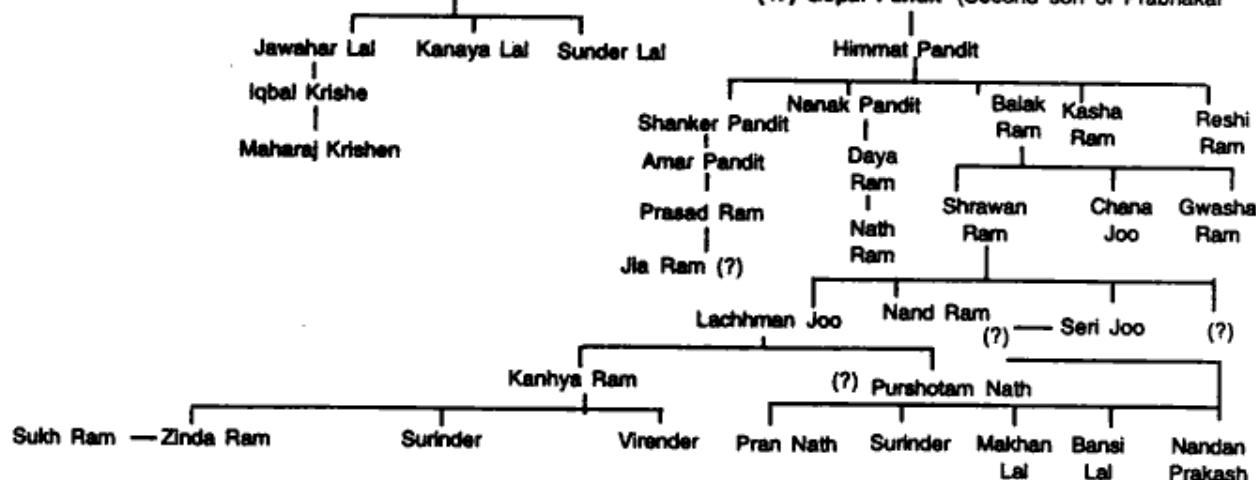
(45) Durga Pandit (S/o Lala Dhar Table 42)



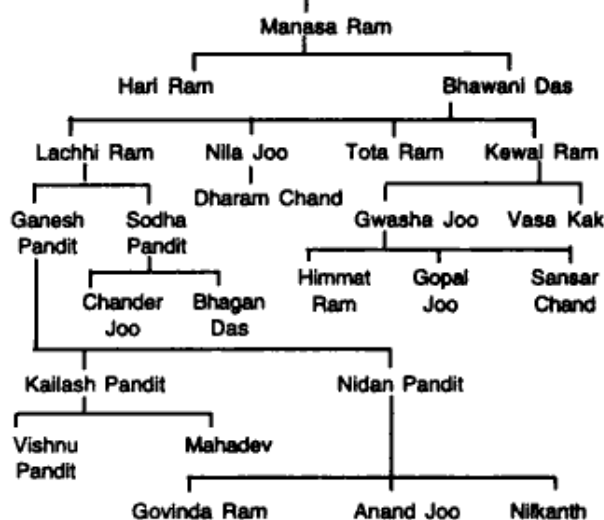
(46) Kirpal Pandit (S/o Lala Joo Table 42)



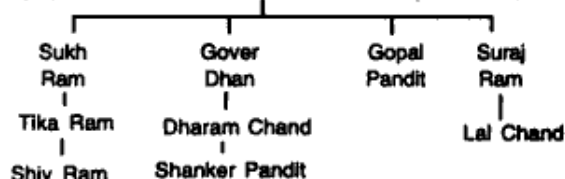
(47) Gopal Pandit (Second son of Prabhakar)



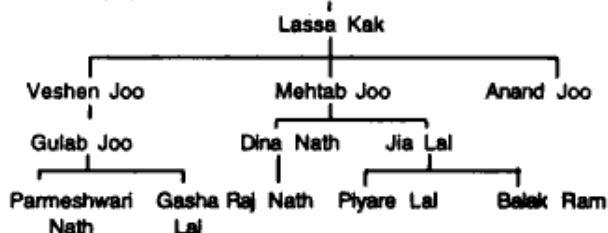
(48) Chatur Pandit (Fourth son on of Lala Joo Table 48)



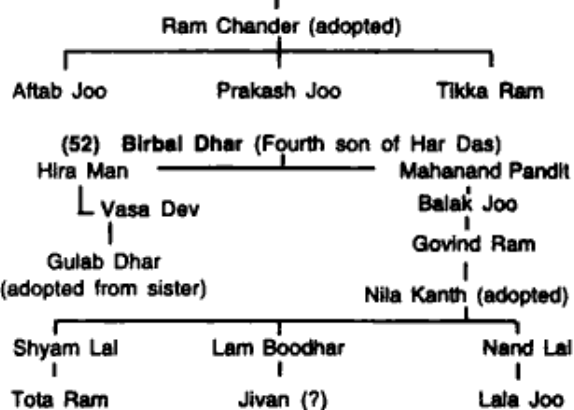
(49) Bhawani Das (Second son of Manasa Ram)



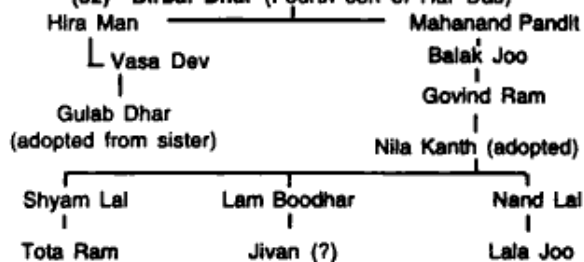
(50) Ishwar Das (Seventh S/o Har Das)



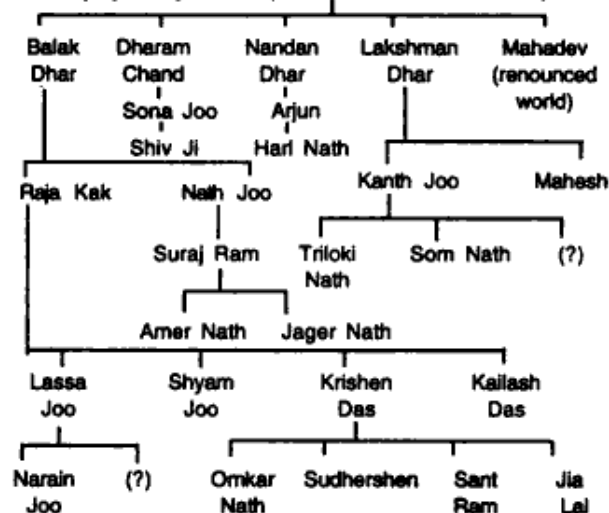
(51) Ganesh Das (Fifth son of Har Das)



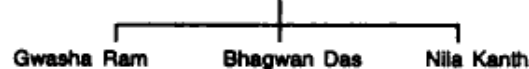
(52) Birbal Dhar (Fourth son of Har Das)



(53) Vidy Dhar (Second son of Goverdhan)

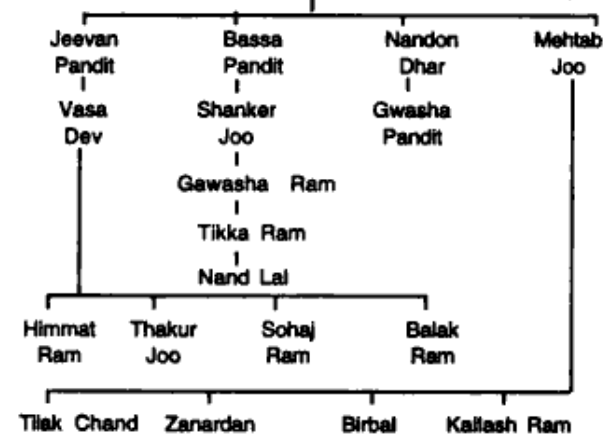


(54) Atma Ram (Second son of Gopal Pandit Table 38)

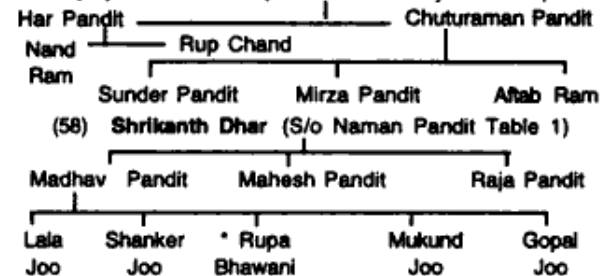


(55) Shiv Ram (already added at Table 38)

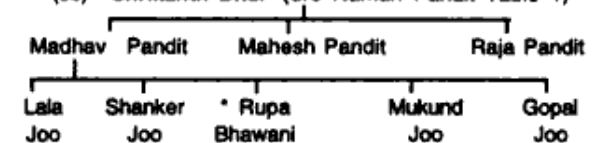
(56) Kripal (Second Son of Manohar Pandit Table 38)



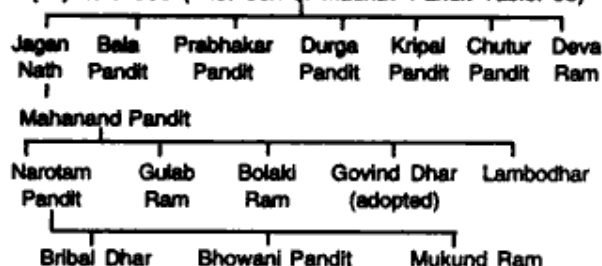
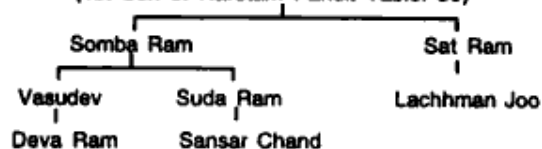
(57) Kashi Ram (Fourth son of Gyan Pandit)



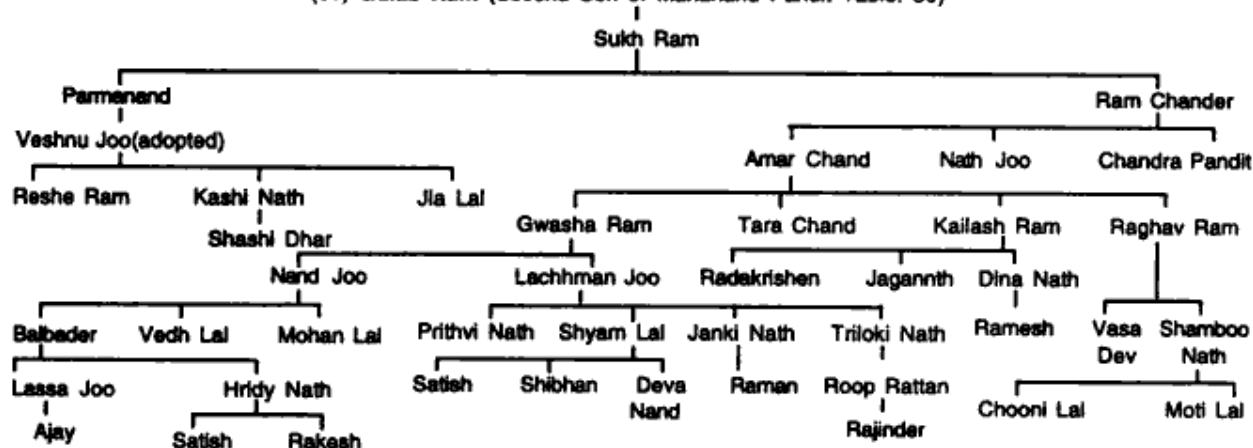
(58) Shrikant Dhar (S/o Naman Pandit Table 1)



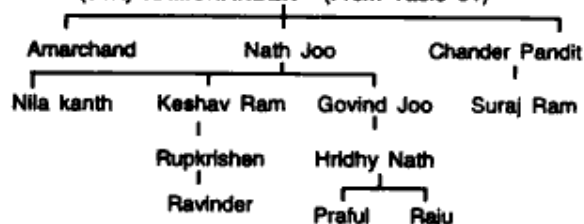
(59) Lala Joo (Frist Son of Madhav Pandit Table. 58)

(60) Birbal Pandit
(1st Son of Narotam Pandit Table. 59)

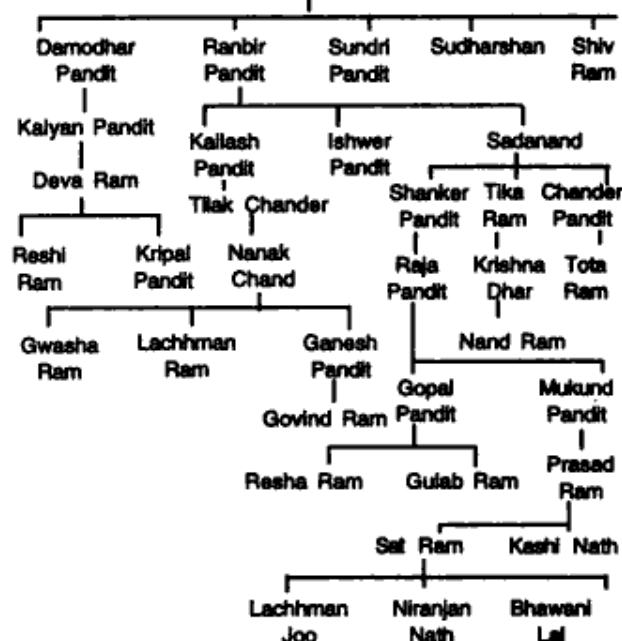
(61) Gulab Ram (Second Son of Mahanand Pandit Table. 59)



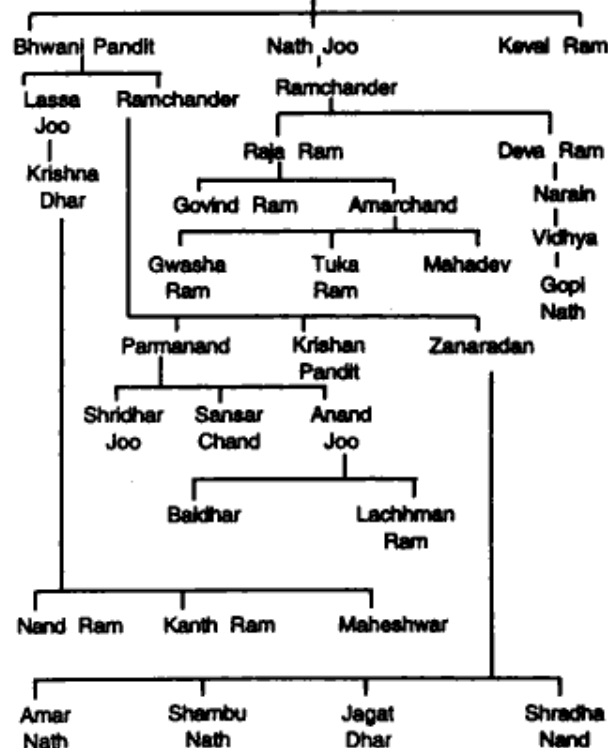
(61A) RAMCHANDER (From Table 61)



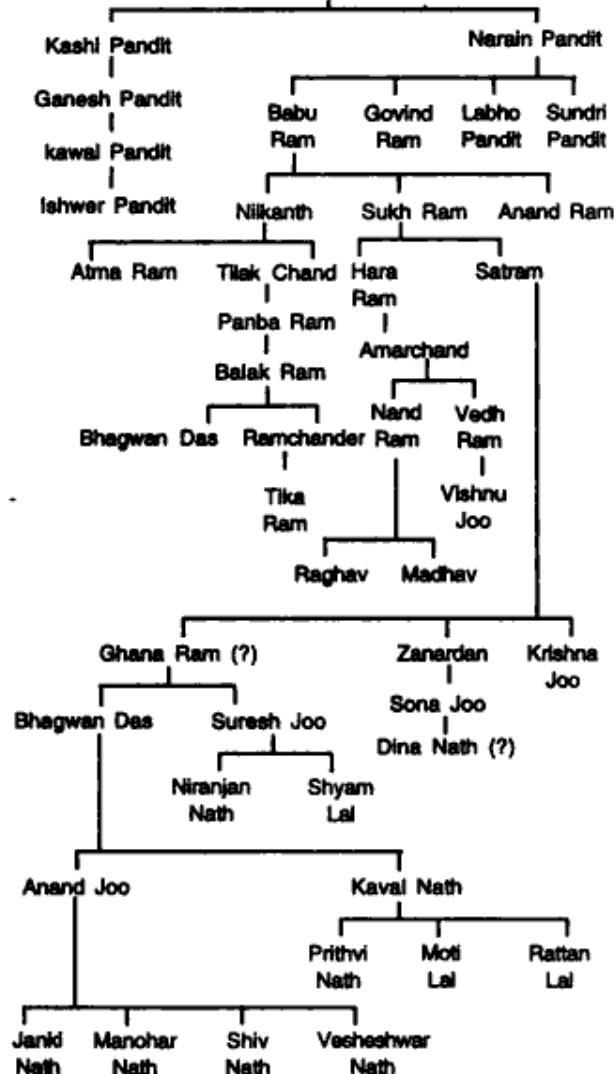
(62) Bala Pandit (Second S/o Lala Joo Table 59)



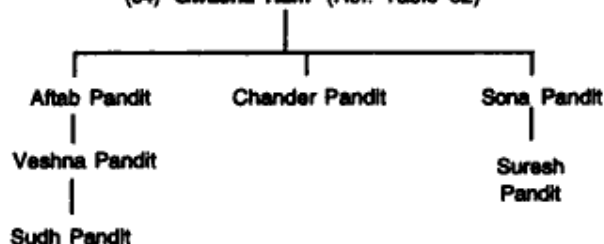
(62A) Sundri Pandit (Ref Table 62)



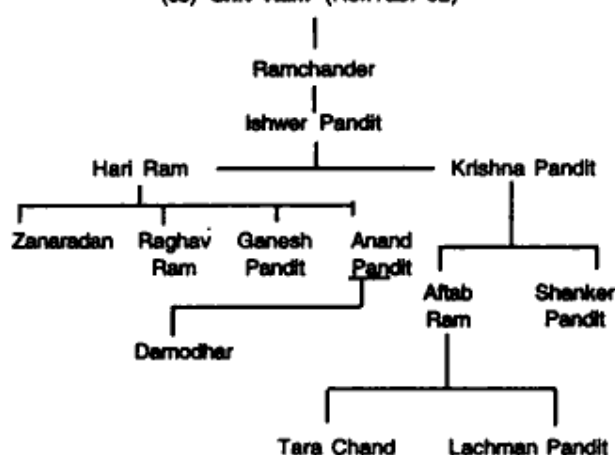
(63) Gopal Joo (Ref. Table 58)



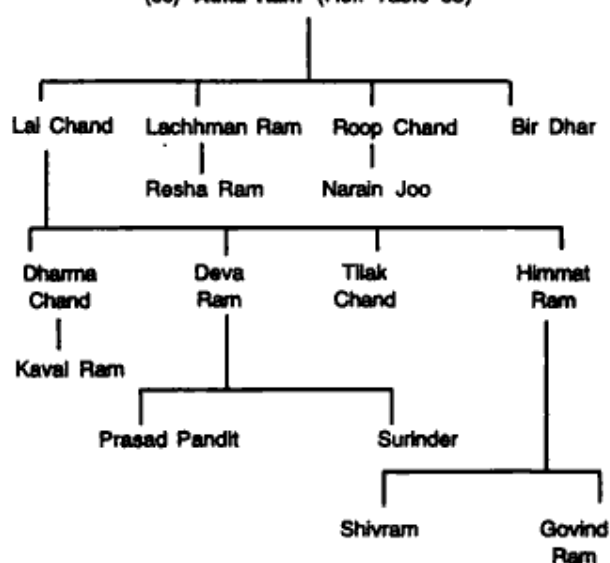
(64) Gwasha Ram (Ref. Table 62)



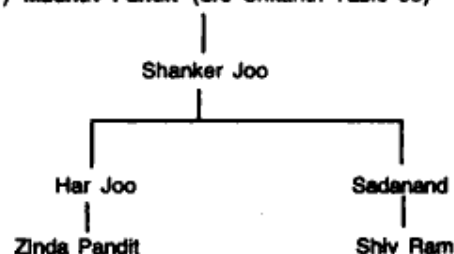
(65) Shiv Ram (Ref. Tab. 62)



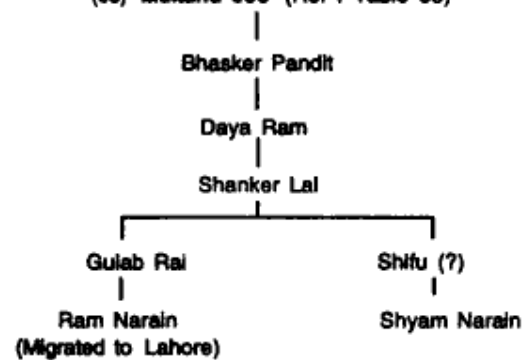
(66) Atma Ram (Ref. Table 63)



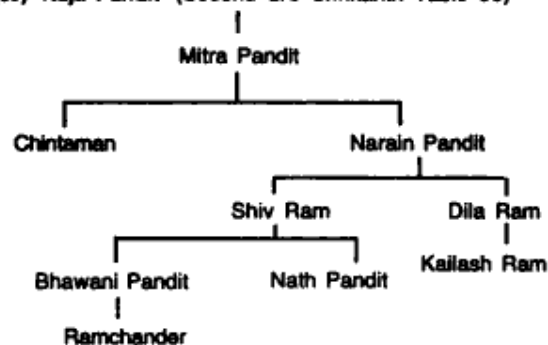
(67) Medhav Pandit (S/o Srikanth Table 58)



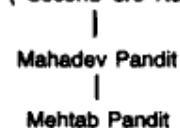
(68) Mukund Joo (Ref. Table 58)



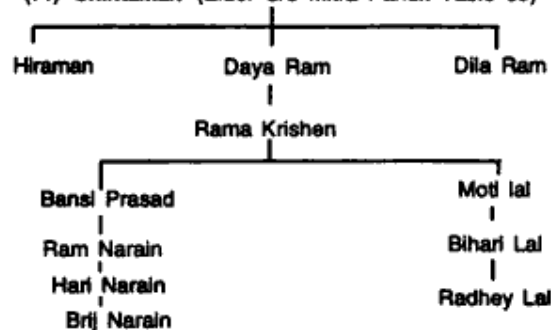
(69) Raja Pandit (Second S/o Shrikanth Table 58)

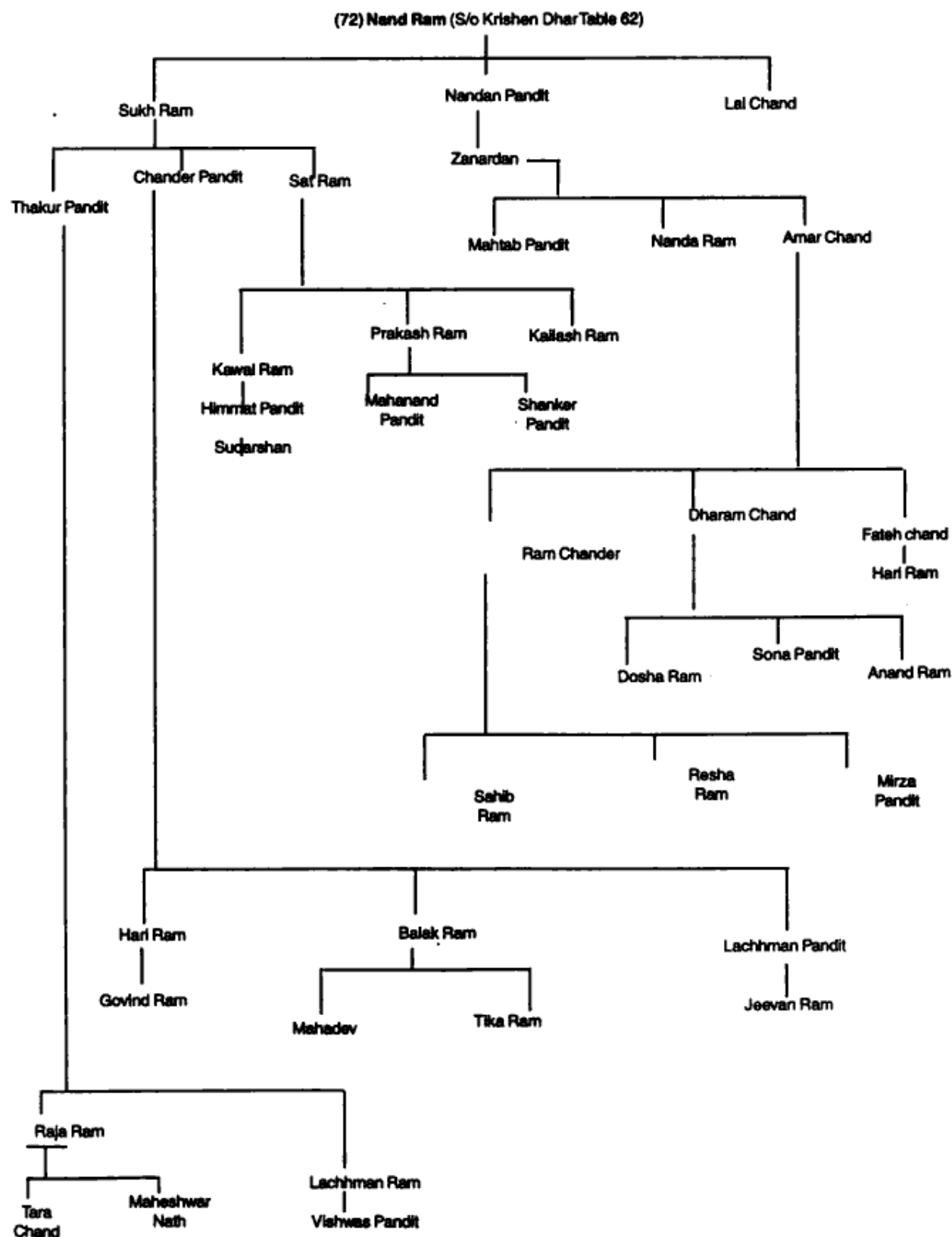


(70) Govind Ram (Second S/o Narain Pandit Table 63)



(71) Chintaman (Elder S/o Mitra Pandit Table 69)





THE DHARS : AN OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

'DHARS' derive their name from their GOTRA — Dharbardaz. The name has been further fortified by a historical coincidence.

During the medieval period of Kashmir's history, Kashmiri Pandits had to run away from the valley due to the intolerable religious persecution of some of the sultans like Sultan Sikender the iconoclast, Sultan Ali Shah and Sultan Haider Shah. Thousands of Brahmans were put to death and major portion of Hindu population of Kashmir had to migrate to the South.

A chunk of these migrants had settled in one of the small states of Madhya Pradesh called Dhar. The place is still extant in Madhya Pradesh and it is precisely due to this reason that they earned their family name as 'Dhar'. Due to their hard work, scholarship and language skills they carved a respectable place for themselves. One Mero Pandit, making humble beginnings in the Mughal Army after winning laurels in the field reached to the position of a General and was placed at the head of Nurjehan's Army. Earlier he had become the chief of the Golkanda Fort in South India. In the battle of Kabul he proved his valour. He was also instrumental in rendering meritorious services to the Emperor Jahangir when he was taken as a prisoner by Mahabat Khan on the bank of Jehlum while he was coming to Kashmir.

Mahabat Khan had rendered services to the Emperor in suppressing the rebellion of Shah Jehan and he was very happy with him. He had been promoted to various ranks out of proportion. This had excited jealousy in Nur Jehan. The Queen's hostility towards him had provoked a rebellion by Mahabat Khan. Pandit Mero Pandit Dhar being head of Nurjehan's Army was bound to go by her advice and as such had succeeded in his military adventures. He even managed to get the Emperor freed from the clutches of Mahabat Khan.

To reward Mero Pandit Dhar, Jehangir, granted whole of Kamraj (Baramulla District) in Kashmir as a Jagir to him which was later inherited by the decedents of Pandit Gulab Dhar and others down below. Seeing Emperor favourably inclined towards him he made a prayer to him for getting all the migrants living in Dhar back to Kashmir which was granted to him. Whether all of them came back or not, but Pandit Mero Pandit did settle in Kashmir. Since then, they have been living in Kashmir as Dhar's and rendering their services of great historical importance. They have been known for their scholarship, administrative skill and financial management.

Some of the luminaries marked in the genealogical table above are:

*** MERO PANDIT DHAR**

He was the founder of the dynasty of Dhars'.

***BOLAKI PANDIT DHAR**

To this great man goes the credit of initiating the maintenance of the family tree of Dhars'.

***GULAB JOO DHAR**

He was an officer incharge of Kamraj pargana (Baramulla District). He inherited the Jagir of Mero Pandit Dhar and was the most influential member of Dhar nobility. He had to undergo a self inflicted exile to Kishtawar and take the shelter under the Raja of Kishtawar to save himself from the wrath of the Afgan brigand - Governor Azad Khan.

***MAHANAND DHAR**

He was the Prime Minister of Sukh Jewan Mal an Afgan Governor (1753-62). Due to the tyranny of Fzl Kanth he had to leave Kashmir and take shelter in a mountain fortress at Poonch.

***KAILASH DHAR**

He was the Prime Minister of Nur-Ud-Din Khan Bamzai (1765-66) and the Chief Revenue Farmer of Khurram Khan (1966-67). He achieved martyrdom when he was done to death by Fazl Kanth openly in the Darbar Hall.

***BIRBAL DHAR**

This courageous man dared to approach Maharaja Ranjit Singh for helping him with his army to throw away Pathan Rule from Kashmir. He left his son Pt. Rajkak Dhar as a hostage with the Maharaja till he succeeded in vanquishing the last Afgan Governor. In this patriotic venture he had to lose both his wife and daughter-in-law.

***RUPA BHAWANI**

She was born in A.D. 1625, when India was ruled by Aurangzeb. She was the daughter of Pandit Madhav Dhar. They lived on the bank of river Jehlum between 'Safa Kadal' and 'Nawa Kadal'; Across the river lived a Muslim Faqir, Sayid Kamal popularly known as Thagbaba Sahib. Pandit Madhav Dhar was spritually an elevated personality. Thagbaba Sahib would cross the river and engage in philosophical discourses with him. Rupa Bhawani was brought up in this kind of environment.

Like Lallehwari, she also was not treated well at in-laws. She took to spiritual path under the guidance of her father. As would her verses show, she had reached to high level of spritual emanicipation. She is as such, given the name of Alak-Ishwari. (incarnation of the Invisible). Even Rupa Bhawani entered into philosophical discussions with a Muslim mystic Shah Sadiq Qalander. Her verses show the influence of Kashmir Saivisim and Islamic Sufism

***SAHAZ RAM DHAR**

He held the important post of Revenue collector (Revenue Farmer). He was the father of Ganesh Pandit Dhar and it was he who foiled the conspiracy of getting Kashmiri Pandit notables killed in a Hamam by suffocating them to death at the house of one Nur Shah.

- *GANESH DHAR** He was the Prime Minister under the Governorship of Sher Singh. He led a military expedition to Skardu and defeated Ahmad Shah, the ruler of that place. It was a very hazardous operation and he won the acclaim of the Governor for performing such a kind of military feat. He was granted Seer, as his Jagir as a reward for the achievement. He was also one of the principal contributors of *Tarikh Kalan-i-Kashmir*, a comprehensive Manual of historic importance.
- *MIRZA PANDIT DHAR** He was the brother of Sahaz Ram Dhar. He was a Revenue Farmer under the Governorship of Hari Singh Nalwa. He was a very influential and powerful noble of that time.
- *PANDIT RAJKAK DHAR** He was a great patriot who willingly accepted to remain as a hostage with Maharaja Ranjit Singh when his father sought help from him for invading Kashmir. In this process, he had to lose his mother and wife. He was also Daroga-I-Dagshawl (Head of the Dagshawl) under Dogras. He was very powerful person of his time.
- *PANDIT VASAKAK DHAR** (Harkarbashi) He was incharge of police and Intelligence Deptt. under Governor Azim Khan. He achieved martyrdom for not revealing the place where the wife and the daughter-in-law of Birbal Dhar were kept in concealment.
- *PANDIT SHYAM
SUNDER LAL DHAR** Besides being a Jagirdar, Shyam Sunder Lal was the man who held 10,412 kanals of land under his proprietorship in 1950 and was the biggest landlord among Kashmiri Pandits. He was a man of great influence and social importance in his times. He was Wazir-i-Wazarat.
- *PANDIT BALKAK DHAR** He was the Rais Azam and Jagirdar of Kashmir. He was also a Wazir-i-Wazarat. He owned 5,144 Kanals of land in 1950. He is the author of the geneological table of Dhar Nobility existing at present. He has played very important role in the Social Reform Movement of Kashmiri Pandits.
- *PANDIT DURGA PRASHAD
DHAR** He was a rebel against the existing social institutions of his times. He was one of the pioneers of the revolutionary movement which advocated the liquidation of centuries old feudal order and abolition of monarchy in Kashmir. He became the Deputy Home Minister under the Prime Ministership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Home Minister in the Cabinet of Mr. G. M. Sadiq. He rose to the level of Planning Minister of India under Indira Gandhi. He was the author of Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty which he formulated as the Ambassador of India in Soviet Union. He played vital role in the formation of Bangla Desh.
- *D.N. DHAR** The author of the work to which this geneological table forms one of the appendixes.

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- Hauzwhol; a functionary in handmade paper making. 50, 88
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- Hundika; a credit instrument, a bill of exchange, a Hindi. 14
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 Karim Dad khan; a governor during Afgan Rule in Kashmir. 32, 86
 Karkuta; a dynasty of kings in ancient Kashmir. 16, 17
 Karkhandar; an owner of a Karkhana, factory. 44, 45, 46, 53, 74, 75, 76, 85, 88, 92, 93, 96, 99, 105, 134, 139, 148
 Kasbeh; handkerchief. 82
 Kashgar; an ancient city of Chinese Turkistan, Sinkiang. 54, 57, 69
 Kasidakari; a type of embroidery. 160.
 Kashmir carpet factory; located at Srinagar, then. 146.
 Kashmiri Pandits; a cultured ethnic minority of Kashmir. 32, 110
 Kashmir Silk Syndicate; an apex marketing organisation in Kashmir. 135, 136
 Kashmir Traders union; belonged to Kashmir then. 121
 Kashyap Industries; a silk weaving factory at Srinagar. 134
 Katka leaf; a golden ornament. 16
 Kaul, Trilok, Director, School of Designs then. A reputed artist. 130
 Keliphumb; short underwool of a shawl goat. 68
 Kennard; introduced house boats in Kashmir. 55
 Kermes; source of red dye. 70
 Kerr; the person who manufactured paisley shawl. 67
 Kesva; Siva. 13
 Khadi; handmade cotton cloth. 98, 104, 134
 Khalil khani; a shawl made after its design. 82.
 Khalits; purses or bags. 82
 Khankah-i-Maula; a historical mosque on river Jehlum. 101
 Khan Sahib Dr.; a veteran congress leader then. 110
 Khari; a kharwar, about two mounds. 14, 19
 Kharwar; a khari. 42, 44, 48, 86, 87
 Khawnposh; dish covers. 82
 Khir-kha butha; a shawl named after a design. 72
 Khoka; a marauding tribe in Kashmir, then. 43
 Khokand; an ancient town in Uzbekistan. 29
 Khotan; an ancient town in Sinkiang. 28, 66, 69
 Khudrang; natural colour. 69, 140
 Khutba; is delivered after Nimaz by a religious preacher. 100
 Khutumband; ceiling designed of the slices of pine wood. 29, 34, 55, 85
 Khushal Singh, Jamadar; sent for revenue collection by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. 41, 56, 92
 Kien-po-lo; cloth of fine goat hair. 11
 Kiungridar; a shawl named after its design. 82
 Knossos; an ancient place in crete. 5.
 Koftagari; Inlaid work of steel and gold. 56
 Kongs'r Nag; a glacial lake in Kashmir. 83
 Korus; cousins of Pandavas. 12, 64, 65.
 Kripa Ram, Diwan; a governor during Sikh times. 40
 Ksmendera; a poet and an author in Sanskrit. 14
 Kulgam; a town in Kashmir. 55, 104
 Kumangarpura; a locality in Srinagar. 50
 Kunjbthadar; a shawl named after its design. 82
 Kupwara; a town in Kashmir. 14, 148, 153, 157, 166, 167, 170, 174
 Kurt Bittal; a reputed archaeologist. 4
 Kusa; a kind of grass. 150

L

- Laba Ram; name of the head constable, who was charged of desecration. 100
- Ladakh; a division of Jammu and Kashmir State. 24, 39, 40, 66, 69, 172
- Lala Ganeshi Lal; a traveller from the Punjab then. 86
- Lul Ded; a Shaivite Yogini. 77
- Lalitaditya; a great king of Kashmir during ancient times. 12, 14, 15, 17, 23, 24, 65
- Langota; a waist belt. 82
- Larkana; a town in Sindh. 5
- Lassa; capital of Tibet. 56, 66, 176
- Laurence Sterne; an English novelist. 67
- Lawrence, W.R.; who conducted a historic land and revenue settlement of J & K. State. 18, 48, 49, 58, 87, 91, 92, 94, 119
- Leh; capital of Ladakh. 69
- Leh Treaty Road; led to Ladakh from Kashmir Valley. 54, 111
- Lena Kapu; white pashmina in Tibetan language. 68
- Lena Nakapu; brown pashmina in Tibetan language. 68
- Leonardo da Vinci; a reputed Renaissance painter. 29, 78
- Leonardo Woolly; a reputed archaeologist. 3, 6, 9
- Lidder; a river which draws from Punch Tarn in Kashmir. 83
- Line; a kind of wood in Kashmir. 70
- Linga; a symbol of Lord Siva. 11, 13, 16, 17, 65
- Lohara; a dynasty of ancient kings in Kashmir. 17
- Lohkot; name of a fort in Jammu division then. 23, 34
- Loies; Woollen blankets. 140, 142
- Lokprakash; authored by Kshem-endera. 18
- London Exhibition; held on the coronation of Elizabeth-II. 123
- Ludhiana; a city in Punjab. 93
- Lynes; a town in France. 67

M

- Macdonell; a reputed archaeologist. 6
- Mahabharat; a famous Indian epic. 1, 12, 16, 64, 65
- Maharaj Gunj; a whole sale market at Srinagar. 101
- Majlis-i-Ahram; a political organisation under nationalist influence. 109
- Malabar; Western coast of India. 11
- Malik Lodni Lod; one who stole a store of shawls during the time of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. 66
- Mallia; a place in Greece. 5
- Mandipika; a lamp of jewells without soot. 15

- Marketing clinic; organised at Srinagar then. 124
- Martanda; a famous ancient temple in Kashmir. 17, 25, 85
- Masulipatnam; an Indian city, known for carpets. 145
- Matha; a religious endowment. 36
- Mathdari; one who holds a religious endowment. 42
- Mathandar; a shawl named after its design. 82
- Maulana Kabir; tutor of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. 26
- Maulvies; Islamic preachers. 100, 101
- Maulvi Yusuf Shah; Mirwaiz of Kashmir then. 102
- Mavar-un-Nahr; a central Asian region. 27
- Mazarposh; Iris. 54
- Meerut Conspiracy case; a case instituted by British colonialists against the freedom fighters of India. 108
- Meherkula; an ancient king of Kashmir. 17
- Mehra builders; of Bombay. 139
- Memorandum, March, 1946; submitted to Cabinet Mission when it visited Kashmir. 115
- Memorandum, 1924; submitted to Lord Reading by local people of Kashmir. 100
- Memorial, August, 1931; submitted to Maharaja Hari Singh on jail episode. 103
- Memorial, Oct. 1931; on the demands of the people. 113
- Menghin; a reputed archaeologist. 2
- Merimade-benisallam; a town in Egypt. 2
- Mian Singh; governor of Kashmir during Sikh times. 41, 42, 92
- Mirak Shah; a Sayid saint of Srinagar. 102
- Mirras; hereditary right. 91
- Mir Sayid Ali Hamdani, a Sayid missionary from Ham-dan. 28
- Minoan Civilization; One of the ancient civilizations. 4
- Mirza Ali; produced costliest shawl. 46
- Mirza Haider Dughlat, ruled Kashmir during Sultanate period. He was from Central Asia. Author of *Tarikh-i-Rashide*. 26, 28, 29, 34, 66, 84
- Mirzapur; an Indian city, known for carpets. 145, 149
- Mitchell and Co; carpet manufacturers, then. 116
- Mochigate; a locality in Lahore. 108
- Modern Carpet Factory; was at Srinagar then. 146
- Mogol Merchants; were Shawl wool merchants. 66, 69
- Mohammad Bhat; master Cabbacraftsman. 54
- Mohammad Ghazni; invaded India. 2, 34
- Mohammad Joo; Moorcroft used his Shawl account. 46
- Mohammad Sadiq, Haji; a reputed Shawl merchant. 51
- Mohammad Shah; a Mughal King. 35
- Mohammad Shahi; a shawl design after the name of

- Mohammad Shah. 35.
- Mohammad Tughlak; Sultan of Delhi, then. 66
- Mohammad Yehya Rafiqi; one of the prominent persons who organised a gathering at jail premises on 13th July, 1931. 101
- Mohen Jo Daro; mound of the dead, location of an ancient Indian civilization. 5, 6
- Mohi-ud-Din Gangoo; a reputed Shawl merchant then. 45.
- Mohi-ul-Din Kara; one of the first ranking leaders of National Movement in Kashmir. 122.
- Mohrakash; rubbers. 88
- Mona Lisa; a famous renaissance painting. 29, 78
- Moorcroft, William; a traveller in Kashmir. 31, 45, 52, 55, 56, 57, 66, 69, 72, 73, 76, 98
- Moti Lal Misri; a Communist leader of Kashmir, then. 114
- Moti Ram; a governor during Sikh times in Kashmir. 40
- Moza; long stockings. 82
- Muafis; type of cash grants. 119
- Mughals; a dynasty which ruled India then. 29, 30, 31, 33, 39, 52, 56, 67, 69, 70, 73, 85, 116
- Mukarraries; type of cash grants. 119
- Mukhtar Shah, Haji; a well-known Shawl merchant, then. 12, 45, 48
- Mukeem; a commission agent. 69, 71, 72
- Mullahism; Muslim obscurantism in this context. 109
- Mullahs; advocate Islamic principles. 99
- Mummies; preserved dead bodies. 3
- Munaqashi; painted work. 27, 50
- Munshi Trilok Chand; a kardar, a collector of revenue. 59
- Muquim Kant, Mir; was instrumental in getting Pathan Rule in Kashmir. 32
- Muslim conference; a political organisation of muslim middle class, then. 105, 109, 110
- Muslim Jagirdar committee; was constituted to give reception to Maharaja Hari Singh after his return from Round Table Conference. 100
- Muslim League; advocated two nation theory and demanded the formation of Pakistan. 115
- ### N
- Nadru; lower part of lotus stem used as vegetable. 77
- Nagaparnat; a conspicuous mountain peak in Kashmir. 83
- Nagjrjuna Kond; a neolithic excavation in India. 7
- Nagzbeg; one who presented a Du-shawl to Mirza Haider Dughlat. 29
- Nakatoo; a warp maker. 70
- Namdaz; felt rugs. 44, 54, 97, 103, 110, 111, 121, 124, 126, 130, 131, 132, 145, 151, 152, 153, 154, 165
- Naoshehra; a suburb of Srinagar, where hand-made paper industry was located then. 50, 140
- Naqash; a designer. 27, 71, 169
- Nara; an ancient king of Kashmir. 14
- Narchoo; a spear used for fishing. 102.
- Narchoo Paltan; a contingent using Narchoo as a weapon. 102
- Narmamala; of Kshemendera. 14
- National conference; led the freedom struggle in Kashmir. 110, 112, 113, 115, 116, 119, 122, 125
- National Demand; a manifesto issued by Hindu and Muslim Leaders before the birth of national conference. 110
- National Federation of Industrial cooperatives; New Delhi. 139
- Nawab Bazaar; a bazaar at Srinagar. 104
- Nazrana; a tax. 41, 92
- Negade; an Egyptian town. 2, 9
- Nehru; Jawahar Lal Nehru. 99, 110, 122, 129
- Neolithic Age; Stone Age. 3, 7, 11
- Nero; an ancient Roman king. 66, 78
- New Kashmir; Economic and political programme of National Conference then. 102, 113, 119, 129, 132
- Nilamat Purana; oldest extant text in Kashmir. 11, 12, 13
- Nile; a great river of Africa. 1, 66
- Niliv; practice of selling grain and saffron to city population. 33, 42, 89
- Nimaz; offered by the Muslims. 100
- Non-cooperation Movement; launched by Gandhi Ji. 98, 99
- Nukdee; a type of shawl entrepreneur. 45
- Nunkun; a group of mountain peaks in Kashmir. 83
- Nurjehan; a mughal queen. 56
- Nursheikh; a gabba master craftsman. 54
- ### O
- October Revolution; Bolshevik Revolution. 112
- Ou-kong; Chinese traveller. 14
- Our Oriental Heritage; by Will Durant. 11
- ### P
- Paipech; leggings. 82
- Paisa; an Indian coin. 70
- Paisley; where-from an imitation of shawl was manufactured. 67

Pakistan; a new country came into existence due to partition of India. 116, 120, 122, 124, 129, 145, 148, 152, 161, 167, 170, 173, 177

Pal; a unit of weight in Kashmir, then. 69

Pala; a shawl named after its design. 72

Pan; a ritual of Kashmiri Pandits. 76

Panch Tarni; a glacial Lake near Amar Nath Cave. 83

Pandit Kaul, Kawal; a kardar during Pathan Rule in Kashmir. 59

Papier Mache; a careful craft of Kashmir. 27, 31, 40, 45, 50, 58, 98, 103, 111, 121, 126, 131, 169, 170

Param Naram; the name given to a shawl by Akbar. 30, 31, 67, 78

Parinda; a decorated boat paddled by so many persons. 55

Pashmina; a very soft and warm wool from north of Kashmir. 11, 12, 29, 30, 53, 65, 66, 72, 77, 97, 98, 104, 111, 121, 136, 141, 142, 160, 167

Pashm Farosh; a retail seller of pashmina wool. 69

Pattana; a town in Kashmir famous for weaving woollens from ancient times. 16

Pattoos; a brand of heavy woollen cloth. 140, 142

Paura; handicraft guilds in ancient India. 13

Peasants charter; a charter of rights of peasants laid in New Kashmir programme. 102, 114

Pearce Gervice; a reputed author. 65, 145, 161

Peoples War; an official organ of communist party of India then. 112

Pergamum; a reputed archaeologist. 5

Persia; Iran. 27, 31, 34, 39

Persian Gulf; Connects Arabian Sea, with Gulf Countries, Iran and Iraq. 3, 11

Persits; a Russian author. 108

Peshawar Conspiracy Case; a case instituted by the British Government against Indian freedom fighters. 108

Petrofills, a cooperative; Baroda. 139

Phaistos; an ancient place in Greece. 5

Phag Pargana; name of a Pargana in Kashmir, then. 27

Phalgam; a tourist resort in Kashmir. 104

Pharoas, ancient Egyptian Kings. 3, 11, 100

Philipp Efremov; a traveller from Russia. 34

Phiri; inferior wool in Kashmiri language. 70

Pictographic Script; script adopting pictures as medium. 2

Piklihal; a Neolithic excavation in India. 7

Pirpansal; a mountain range in Kashmir. 83

Pistanband; necker chief. 82

Postin; leggings. 82

Pradyumana Hill; Hari Parbat hill at Srinagar. 35

Praja Sabha; Legislative Assembly during Maharaja Hari Singh's time. 105, 108

Pramathanath Banerji; a Indian economist. 65

Pratap Singh; Maharaja of Kashmir, then. 43, 91, 97, 98

Pravara; a woollen blanket. 12, 65

Pravarna; a woollen blanket. 15, 65

Praversena; an ancient king of India. 17

Prethihaspura; a town of Lalitaditya. 14

Praja Parishad; a political party of Jammu, then. 122

Prem Nath Bazaz; one of the leading leaders and intellectuals of Kashmir. 110

Puranadhisthana; old capital of Kashmir, Pandrethan. 14

Purzagar; one who clears the shawl of knots and threads etc. 71

Pyramids; famous tombs of ancient Egypt. 1, 3, 9

Q

Qadeer; a British agent provocateur. 101

Qasur-i-Shali; a kind of tax charged on shawls. 33

Qud Lala; who lost life in Shal-baf rising at Srinagar. 94

Quit Kashmir; a Movement demanding annulment of Treaty of Amritsar. 115

Quota System; a system of distribution of silk yarn in Kashmir, then. 134, 135

Qutub-UD-Din; a Muslim Sultan of Kashmir. 225, 28, 66

R

Rabo; he-goat in Tibetan language. 68

Raina; N.N.; a Communist leader of Kashmir, then. 112, 114

Rajtarangini; earliest history of Kashmir by Kalhana. 12, 14, 15, 16, 55, 65, 78

Rainawari; a suburb of Srinagar. 124, 164

Rafal; woollen yarn, not pashmina. 97, 98, 111, 136, 141, 160, 167

Rama; a she-goat in Tibetan language. 68

Ram Lal Kashmiri; one of the artists of Taj Mahal. 30

Ranbir Singh; Maharaja of Kashmir, then. 43, 44, 48, 49, 53, 54, 75, 89, 91, 93, 94

Rangmaz; a kind of hand-made paper. 32, 50

Ranjit Singh; Maharaja of the Sikh State of the Punjab. 39, 40, 41, 42, 50, 52, 77, 92

Rashtrapati Bhawan; Presidential Palace in New Delhi. 127

Rawalpindi; a city in the Punjab, then. 95

Reading Room Party; young educated Muslims organised themselves as for their demands. 100, 105, 109

Red river; Anatolian Civilization flourished on this river in Mesopotamian belt. 5.

Renell Taylor; a representative of His Majesty, then. 92
 Resident; British representative in Kashmir. 98, 105
 Rigveda; earliest scripture of Hindus. 83
 Ripon, lord; Viceroy of India, then. 44
 Robert Thorp; a traveller in Kashmir then. 88
 Rosul Magre; master gubba-craf-tman. 54
 Roth; Sweet baked bread. 77
 Royal Commission; appointed for constitutional reforms by Maharaja Hari Singh. 113
 Rungrez; a dyer. 70

S

Sabastien Manrique; a traveller in India then. 31
 Sabha Parva; of Mahabharata. 12, 16, 64
 Sadiq Ghulam Mohammad; a veteran left National conference leader of kash-mir. 110, 112, 113, 114, 122
 Sahdeva; an ancient king of Kashmir. 24
 Saida Kadal; a locality named after a bridge at Srinagar. 124, 152
 Saif-Ud-Din Kitchlew; one of the leaders of Indian National Congress, then. 109
 Saif Ullah Baba; a reputed shawl merchant. 45
 Sale Deed, the reference is to the Treaty of Amritsar. 115
 Samdhimat; an ancient king of Kashmir. 17
 Saracenic; Arabian or Muslim. 34
 Sardar Patel; one of the top leaders of Indian Freedom Movement. 122
 Sarwanand Raina silk weaving Co.; a silk weaving factory in Kashmir then. 134
 Sastra Shilpa; architects of stone. 84
 Savism; a philosophical thought of Kashmir. 84
 Sayids; came to Kashmir as preachers of Islam. 29
 Sayid Ali Hamdani; a missionary of Islam in Kashmir. 66
 Sayid Maqbool Bahqi; one of the prominent Kashmiris who organised gathering at Central Jail, Srinagar on 13th July 1931. 101
 School of Designs; a research and design development Department at Srinagar. 130
 Seer; near about one kilogram. 69
 Setu; a bund or a bridge. 17
 Shah-i-Hamdan; a mosque at Srinagar. 26, 161
 Shah-i-Jehan; a Mughal king of India. 31
 Shah Mohammad; a reputed trader in Kashmir Arts. 145, 161, 164
 Shahnama; of Firdusi. 51
 Shahtush, fine Pashmina. 143
 Shala phiri; inferior shawl wool. 81

Shal-bafs; shawl weavers. 43, 44, 45, 53, 74, 77, 86, 87, 88, 93, 94, 102, 160
 Shali; Paddy. 42, 43, 44, 49, 58, 87, 92, 93, 95
 Shalimar; a Mughal Garden in Kashmir. 31, 50, 102
 Shamlas; a girdle. 82
 Shams-Ud-Din; a Communist of Kas-hmir origin. 108
 Shang Civilization; Chinese Civiliz-ation. 5
 Shanker Pandit Kotru; a Kardar, then. 59
 Sharika; a town named after a Hindu Devi, then. 25
 Shawls; very soft and warm woollen blanket. 11, 12, 25, 28, 29, 30, 39, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 58, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 85, 86, 87, 92, 93, 94, 97, 98, 121, 126, 131, 132, 140, 141
 Shawl Warehouse; located in London, then. 49
 Sheikh Rasool; one of the martyrs of Shawl-baf rising in 1865. 94
 Sheikh Jalal-Ud-Din; a Kardar, then. 59
 Sherghari; where the palace of Afgan Governor was located, then. 52
 Sher Mohammad Khan; an Afgan Governor in Kashmir, then. 33
 Sher Singh; Son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. 41, 56
 Shesa; Symbolising Siva. 25
 Shias; a sect among muslims. 30, 40, 42, 44, 50, 94, 99
 Shihab-Ud-Din; a great Muslim Sultan of Kashmir. 25
 Shihabdin pora, a town named after Sultan Shihab-Ud-Din. 25
 Shiv Ratri; a night when the puja of Shiv and Shakti is done in Kashmir. 77
 Shrada; a ritual of death anniversary of a Hindu. 13, 28
 Shri Vara; a Sanskrit historian of Kashmir. 28
 Shrikanth Raina Silk weaving Co.; existed in Srinagar then. 150.
 Shubad; one of the ancient queens of Iraq. 9
 Shushan; an Iranian town. 3
 Shyam Lal Saraf; one of the first ranking leaders of National Conference, then. Also a Minister in Sheikh Abdullah's cabinet. 136
 Sialkot; a city of India then, now in Pakistan. 49
 Sidhipuri; a town built by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. 35
 Sikender; a Sultan of Kashmir. 25
 Sikhra; a Hindu architectural symbol. 34
 Silk; drawn from the cocoon of a silkworm. 28, 32, 111, 121, 134
 Silver-ware; reference is to Kashmir. 176, 177
 Sinkiang; falls in Eastern Cen-tral Asia. 54

Sita; wife of Lord Rama. 61, 78
 Star; a musical instrument. 55
 Small Cottage Industries Board; Bombay. 123
 Small Scale Industries Board; of India. 125
 Snankostha; bathing enclosure. 17
 Socialist Revolution; Bolshevik Rev-olution. 112
 Soha; a shawl. 28
 Solar-Lunar Calendar; Chinese Calendar. 5
 Sona Shah; a martyr of Shal-baf rising. 1865. 94
 Sona Ullah, shawl; a reputed shawl merchant of Kashmir then. 2
 South Kingston Museum; London. 45
 Soviet Russia; Previously called So-viet Union. 108, 113
 Sozni; fine needle work. 162, 164, 167
 Stein, M.A.; Who translated *Rajtarangini* of Kalhana. 34
 Step Mastaba; first ever pyramid built in Egypt. 3.
 Spencer and Co.; of West Germany. 127
 Suba; a province. 32
 Suhabatt; Prime Minister of Sultan Sikender. 25
 Sumer; capital of Sumerian civilization. 1, 3, 6
 Sumerkand; an ancient a Central Asian town. 10, 18, 26, 27, 29, 31, 66, 145
 Sunnies; a sect of Muslims. 30, 40, 42, 44, 94, 145
 Surahi; a water container. 52, 56
 Sussala; an ancient king of Kashmir. 17
 Sutlege; an Indian river. 24
 Suyyapura; modern Sopore in Kashmir. 35
 Swadeshi Movement; launched by Gandhi Ji. 98, 104, 105, 111, 139, 145

T

Tabdan Tarashi; lattice work. 26, 27, 34, 85
 Taj Mahal; a world famous tomb in India. 39
 Takia; a pillow cover. 82
 Takposh; hangings or curtains. 82
 Talab Khatian; a pond in Samba Tehsil, Jammu. 100
 Talimguru; one who renders a design into a script. 71, 72
 Tambour; a hook for chain stitch embroidery. 164
 Tantra; Hindu mystical or magical writings. 7, 15
 Taraguru; a colour caller. 71, 72
 Tarah; a practice of selling grains and saffron to city population, Niliv. 33, 87
 Tarfarosh; a yarn seller, (woollen) 70
 Tarikh-i-Rashide; written by Mirza Haider Dughlat. 16, 28
 Tashkent; a capital city in Central Asia. 108

Tatakuti; a prominent mountain peak in Kashmir. 83
 Tekkila Kotla; a neolithic excavation in India. 7
 Temporary Truce; an understanding with government by Kashmir leaders on shameless terms. 102
 Tibet; a Chinese province in Himalyan region. 45, 75, 77, 39, 66, 68, 79
 Tibet-baquals; merchants who procured and sold shawl wool. 39, 69
 Tien Shan; a mountain range bordering Central Asia. 69, 77
 Tiers Estate; Third Estate during the French Revolution. 92, 101, 119
 Tigris; name of a great river. 1, 3, 5
 Tiku M.L.; headed Handloom House, Bombay then. 139
 Tiku, R.K.; did a pioneering job for Handloom Silk Industry in Kashmir. 136, 137
 Tilak, a mark on the forehead of a Hindu. 76
 Timur; who invaded India. 26
 Toilers of the East; a communist university in Moscow, then. 108
 Tokins; Caps. 82
 Tosamadan, known for its mountain pass, Kashmir. 23, 34
 Toshkhana; a store of precious collections. 40, 56
 Tujis; wooden needles. 71
 Turfan; a Central Asian region. 69
 Truska Country; a muslim cou-ntry. 16, 25
 Tuton Khuman; a famous tomb. 9
 Trak; four seers under the context. 47, 69
 Treaty of Amritsar; ownership of Kashmir was trans-ferred to Maharaja Gu-lab Singh under this Treaty. 48, 91, 92, 115
 Tripureshveri; a Hindu deity. 25
 Tsar; an emperor of Russia then. 108
 Tsar-i-Sherief; a town with a famous shrine in Kashmir, which was torched by terrorists not belonging to Kashmir. 40
 Tso-Mo; cloth made of hem. 11

U

Udayshri; a Minister of Sultan Shihab-ud-Din. 25
 Upavesana; a castle. 23
 Ur; an ancient town in Iraq. 3, 5, 9
 Ushkur; a location of famous excavation in Kashmir. 12
 Usmana; the name of an expert gun maker then. 59
 Ustad; a master craftsman. 71, 74, 75, 88
 Uttara Patha; northern region of India. 14

Utpala; a dynasty of ancient kings in Kashmir. 17

V

Varaha; a Hindu deity. 25

Vasna; a dress. 12

Vastra; a dress. 12

Vatak Puja; puja performed by Kashmiri Pandits on Shivratri. 7

Vesau; a river in South Kashmir, Visoka. 83

Vesnu temple; constructed by an ancient king, Nandi Gupta. 17

Vichar Nag; a suburb of Srinagar. 101

Victoria Albert Museum; is located at London. 45, 53, 56

Victorian Age; important period of English history named after Queen Victoria. 44

Vijayesvera; extant town of Bijbehara, Kashmir. 16

Vigne, G.T.; a traveller in Kashmir then. 47, 69, 87

Vikramankdevacarita; a poem written by Bilhana. 11

Vincent Robinson; of India Museum. London. 53

Vishaya; a Hindu deity. 25

Visvakarma; originator of crafts, the god of crafts. 13, 26

Vitasta; river Jehlum. 7, 14, 17, 25, 35, 55

Von Schonberg; a traveller in Kashmir then. 84

Vosta; a master craftsman, Vostakar. 120, 170

Vular; a lake in Kashmir valley, Mahapadam Saras. 83

W

Wagon wheel; was first found with Elomites. 3

Wafarosh; a middleman. 71, 74

Wall Street; an American Commerce and Finance Centre. 103

Warda; head quarter of A.I.S.A. 104

Wazir; a Minister. 30

Wazir Pannoo; a Wazir under Ma-haraja Ranbir Singh. 94

Will Durant; author of story of civilization etc. 11

Windsor Castle; London based. 53

Woftangil; a grass in Kashmir. 70

Women's Charter; a charter of rights of women in New Kashmir 114

Wood Carving; an elegant craft in Kashmir. 45, 112, 121, 126, 131, 172, 173, 175

Workers charter; a charter of rights of workers in New Kashmir. 114, 127.

X

Nil

Y

Yama; god of death. 25

Yaqub Sarfi, Sheikh; was instrumental in inviting Akbar for ruling Kashmir. 29, 32

Yarkand; an ancient town on Eastern Turkistan, Sinkiang. 39, 51, 54, 57, 66, 69

Yashaya; name of a Sayid from Baghdad who presented Kashmir shawl to Khadive who in turn presented it to Napoleon. 33

Yezar; trousers. 82

Yona; Jenu, a sacred thread around a Brahman's neck. 77

Young Husband; a traveller in Kashmir then. 56, 84

Young men's Muslim Association; struggled for the rights of the oppressed in Kashmir, then. 100, 109

Yudhishtira; eldest of Pandvas. 16, 64

Yusef Qureshi; one of the leaders of freedom struggle in Kashmir. 109

Z

Zadibal; a Shia locality in Srinagar. 40, 94

Zaingari; a town in Kashmir Valley. 35

Zainkadali, the extant Zainakadal bridge in Srinagar. 35

Zain-ul-Abidin; one of the great Sultans of Kashmir, Badshah. 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 50, 66, 74, 145, 162, 93

Zaldagar; is the locality at Srinagar where the Shal-baf rising took place in 1865. 94

Zanjir; a shawl named after its design. 72

Zari-Dudah; a tax on Hindus during pathan Rule in Kashmir. 32

Zulju; a Tartar invader, Dulchu. 18, 24